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Stuart Butchart

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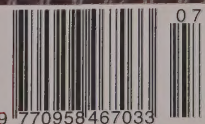
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EDITORIAL ENGAGEMENT FOR BRANDS
IN PRINT • ONLINE



editorial

Lessons from West Cumbria

Like the Dunblane and Hungerford killing sprees, the multiple shootings in West Cumbria are deeply tragic, not least for their random nature. Derrick Bird's unexpected and apparently unpredictable action has left his family and his community bemused, distressed and grieving.

But a matter of valid concern is the way in which the press has reported and reflected on Derrick Bird, in particular, the views they have expressed and the language used in respect of his state of mind, or mental health.

Most forensic psychologists asked to give instant diagnoses refused to do so preferring to reserve judgement until after what one of them referred to as a "psychological post mortem" had been conducted.

What then was the basis for *The Sun's* description of him variously as "psycho cabbie, massacre madman, crazed Bird", when in the same breath they admitted that the reason he "flipped" was "unclear".

The Mirror and *The*

People also referred to him as "crazed" while at the same time admitting that there was no evidence of mental health issues. *The Daily Mail* similarly presented no evidence for its claim that his mental state was unstable due to personal issues.

In *The Daily Telegraph*, what authority did Fay Weldon have for reaching the conclusion that Bird was "insane" and "a psychopath"?

No one would dispute that there was some deep psychological cause or trigger for Derrick Bird's actions. But there are two concerns about defining him in such terms as these.

Firstly, they are inaccurate in that they have no basis in fact. Had he lived and been arrested he would have been subject to a whole array of psychological tests to establish whether, for instance, he should be committed to a secure psychiatric facility. Secondly, how does it help those trying to live with mental health conditions to have them demonised in this sensationalist and lazy way?

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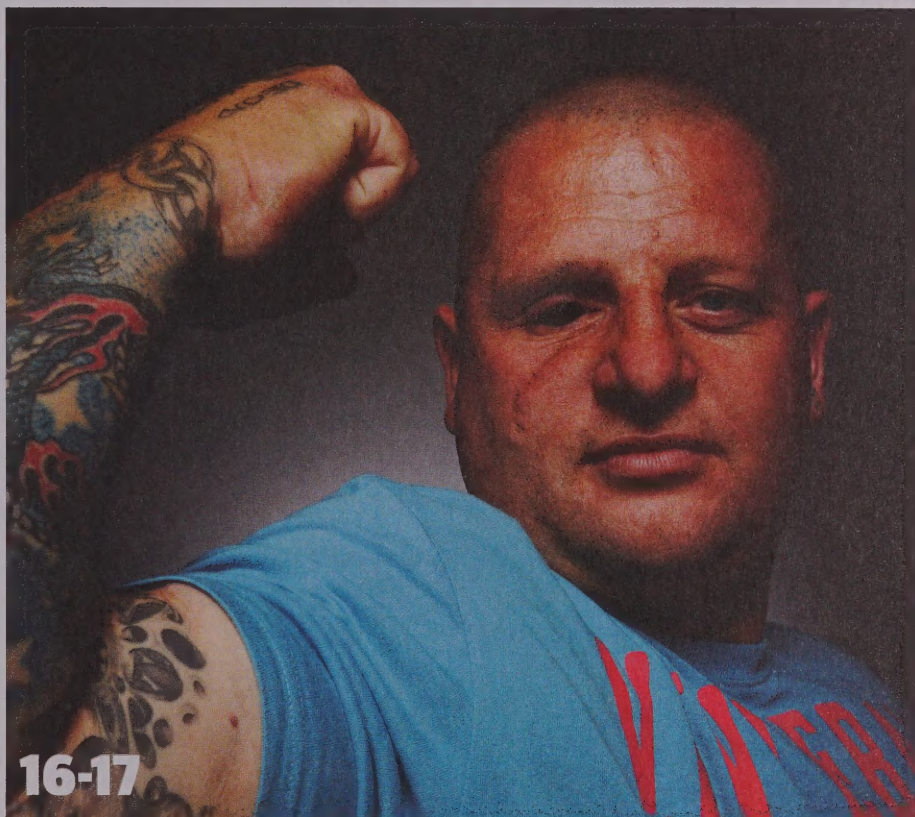
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newsview

Benefits: "No sacred cows" says new minister

Ian Macrae

Recent pronouncements by David Cameron, George Osborne and Nick Clegg have made it clear. These are tough times and they're about to get a whole lot tougher.

As the new occupant of the Minister for Disabled People's desk at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Maria Miller (pictured) herself puts it: "We do have to deal with government debts. They're at record levels and we can't go on like that, it's not sustainable and getting it under control is going to be everybody's responsibility throughout government."

Arguably no government department feels less pointedly the horns of the dilemma on which the coalition Government sits than DWP.

On the one hand, they're required to contribute more than half a billion pounds towards the overall savings target: on the other, they're responsible for serving a welfare and benefits client group which, the new minister acknowledges represents the needs of "some of the most vulnerable people in society".



Maria Miller herself takes some comfort in the fact that, "Our Secretary of State [Iain Duncan Smith] has a fantastic track record in supporting vulnerable groups like disabled people."

But she sums up what she sees as the challenge.

"We have to make sure that everything we do improves the lives of disabled people. My job will be to make the money that

we do have work more effectively at supporting disabled people, and I don't believe that there isn't anyone who would say that there isn't a better way to work and new ways of working will be high on my priority list."

In more private moments that must feel like a difficult circle to square. Just how do you maintain appropriate levels of support for people with

much less money in the benefits pot?

Maria Miller sees it working this way.

"It's all about letting communities use money more effectively and, above all, making sure that the work that we do gives disabled people the opportunities that they want and the independence that they want."

Take, for instance, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance. While the previous Labour government gave every appearance of them being up for grabs as part of the general social care spend, former Conservative disability shadow Mark Harper sprang quickly and unequivocally to a commitment to their retention. So where does his substantive replacement now stand?

"What we want to have is a benefits system which supports people in living independently for as long as they can and in the best way they can. There is a benefits review taking place and I know these benefits will be looked at.

"It's a very fragmented system at the moment and if there's a better way for it to work then we shouldn't have any sacred cows."

Early Years: a dynamic career

"I wouldn't have it any other way"



Davina Pope works with children under five at the Bethnal Green Montessori School in London.

Here she discusses how working in early years enables her to develop children in the crucial first five years of their life and provides her with a dynamic career.

"I originally trained as a nurse, but as I have mild hemiplegia - a condition which causes paralysis to one half of the body - I began to find that the long hours and heavy lifting didn't suit me. It was a difficult time and after taking a break and going travelling I realised that my heart belongs in early years. I have always loved being around children and felt that my skills would

be really suited to a role working with children under five.

"I began working in a nursery school, before moving to my current post, where I now look after 22 children aged two and a half to six years. I'm now happier than ever and enjoying making a difference to the all important first five years of children's lives.

"What's great about working in early years is that every single day is different. With more than 20 children at different stages of development, every day is a new challenge and it's an amazing feeling to see them learn and grow, whether you're helping a child to read or take their first steps.

"Every morning I prepare the classroom environment so that every child can find a challenge to suit their interest and further their development.

"I divide my time between working one on one with a child and promoting free flow activity to develop each child's independence.

"Once the children have gone home in the afternoon, I review our observation notes of the day's activities and plan how to follow up the ideas and interests the following day.

"Having hemiplegia hasn't held me back in early years. It has allowed me to clearly focus on the individual needs of the children and provide the support they need, whether for physical or learning development. For instance, one child has hearing difficulties and we have been able

to get him assessed and provide additional support.

"I've also realised that working in early years is a job for all. There are so many areas in the children's workforce that require people of all different abilities and backgrounds, from hands-on nursery working to admin support. All these roles are vital to creating a dynamic workforce and it's important that children have exposure to people from all walks of life as early as possible.

"What's most important is that people have a passion to work with children and want a challenge every day!"



newsupdate

Barnsley couple hit by benefit payment delay

Cathy Reay

A disabled couple say they'll face a fortnight of poverty because the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is proposing to "regulate its service".

Anthony and Marie Smith, from Barnsley (pictured, right), have said that the DWP's changes to income support payments will render them penniless for two weeks, with potential weeks of subsequent financial recovery.

In mid-June, the couple received a letter saying their income support would be administered fortnightly rather than weekly with immediate effect, meaning they wouldn't receive one of their instalments until a week later than usual.

Normally the couple receives £183 weekly, but the new fortnightly system means that after the payment on 14 June, they would not receive anything else until 28 June.

Mr and Mrs Smith are among millions of benefit recipients across the UK who could potentially be affected by the change.

Mrs Smith said: "Each week all our money goes on bills, mortgage and our life insurance. How are we going to pay up when we've



Anthony and Marie Smith: victims of DWP benefits changes

only got half the money?"

The DWP has offered a loan scheme in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to tide recipients over but Mr Smith said the scheme was a "joke".

"If we took the £183 loan the DWP is offering we'd have to pay it back over 12 weeks. We can't afford to pay back that kind of money."

Sue Bott, Director of the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL), said: "I feel alarmed by this because I can just imagine

the headache it would cause people in that situation who are living hand to mouth and don't have any leeway. We know a lot of disabled people in that situation who are isolated and can't rely on others to tide them over."

Neil Coyle, head of policy at Disability Alliance, said:

"We would encourage JCP to be reasonable in seeking repayments, as for many disabled people who experience higher living costs, it would obviously be very unfair to leave any individual without enough to live on."

A DWP spokeswoman said that customers "normally receive an initial letter or interview up to six months in advance", though Mr and Mrs Smith claim never to have received one.

The DWP spokeswoman added: "No customer will lose out as a result of the changes. Because we now pay benefits into bank accounts, customers have a choice of withdrawing their benefit at whichever interval they prefer."

"Whilst it is recognised there may be exceptional circumstances where ongoing weekly payments will be necessary, the expectation is that the majority of customers will move to fortnightly payments."

→ Have you ever been affected by changes in benefit payments? If so,

- write to us Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW
- email us editor@disabilitynow.org.uk
- phone us 020 7619 7323

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Course closure threatens Deaf Studies Centre

by Sunil Peck

Staff and students at Bristol University are vowing to fight the closure of a degree course in Deaf Studies that they say could hit provision for British Sign Language (BSL) users and trigger a shortage of interpreters.

The Deaf Studies undergraduate course has been available at the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) since 1990 and includes modules on the social context of BSL and deaf culture. It has been studied by people who have gone on to work with deaf people in roles including BSL interpreters.

But following a review, the university has proposed to withdraw the course on the grounds of reduced demand which it says has made the course "unsustainable".

It says that students currently on the course and those who have applied to begin studying in 2010 will not be affected.

But Greg Judge, who is disabled and is enrolled on the course, fears that he will be unable to take some modules next academic year because staff may take voluntary redundancy or look for alternative work.

He has set up a website to campaign against the cuts and says that although the



University of BRISTOL Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS)

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MOODLE (UoB access only)

University home > Centre for Deaf Studies > Information in written English... > About the Centre > Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT

The Centre aims to develop the discipline of Deaf Studies in ways that will benefit deaf people in their involvement in, and contribution to, society. Enhance the understanding of hearing people in all matters to do with Deafness and sign language. Establish and extend Deaf Studies as a valid and dynamic University-based multi-disciplinary field.

The Centre started from a research base; this work informs its present practice and future plans. Deaf Studies is the study of the language, community and culture of deaf people.

- Information in English text
- About the Centre
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 - Mission statement
 - Centre policies
 - Centre services
 - Centre students
 - Centre staff
 - 30th Anniversary
 - Innovation in e-learning
 - Careers in Deaf Studies
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Students Union in Bristol is not backing his campaign, he is encouraged by the support he has received from the University and College Union (UCU) and the possibility of challenging the university on legal grounds, a move that is now being investigated.

"The course focuses on the fact that deaf people have created a culture and language that has spawned a deaf community," he said. "Not many people in mainstream society are aware of that. The course gives an opportunity for students of all ages and disabilities to go on to work in the charity

sector and elsewhere, and provide services to the deaf community that are not provided by social services."

A source who works at the Centre but did not want to be named told *Disability Now* that the impact of withdrawing the degree course would be drastic.

He said: "There are only three other comparable degrees in UK universities: at Preston, Wolverhampton and London. Sign language interpreters remain at a low level relative to the UK's deaf population, and so the number of courses available to become an interpreter will be reduced."

Bristol University has stressed there are no plans to close the CDS or end its research work, but Sasha Callaghan, a former UCU president, said the withdrawal of the degree course would be "tragic", making CDS's survival untenable.

She said: "It would pull the foundations out from underneath the Centre. I'm interested to hear that the university thinks the Centre can carry on, but one of its main rationales surely has to be teaching. That's a university's prime purpose: to ensure students receive a good education, and that's completely under threat."

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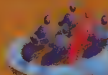
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ruth patrick

It's good to talk



Accessing psychological therapies – such as counselling, psychotherapy and the popular Cognitive Behavioural Therapy – can enable people living with a variety of mental health conditions to better manage and cope with their symptoms, says **Ruth Patrick**

Research suggests that talking therapy is as effective as drugs in the short term for conditions as varied as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, whilst over time its results can be longer lasting and more effective than medication. Historically, there has been a chronic shortage of good psychological therapies available on the NHS, meaning that only a tiny proportion of those who could benefit from such treatments actually received them.

In recognition of the massive potential in psychological therapies, and the large proportion of British people who could benefit from them, the Government introduced the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. Launched in 2006, this programme promised £173 million extra funding for psychological therapies in order to enable 900,000



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more people to access such services by 2010/11. With fine goals, and backed up by a real resource investment, this programme was rightly welcomed and lauded by service user groups and mental health charities alike.

Whilst it is too early to say how far the IAPT package has improved access to psychological therapies for the country at large, recent experiences of mine suggest that there are ongoing barriers and difficulties in getting the therapy one needs. As a mental health service user, who has previously benefited from psychological therapy, I recently approached my GP to request a referral for Cognitive Behavioural

Therapy (CBT). Whilst he agreed that my diagnosis and previously positive reaction to the therapy merited a referral, this was unfortunately not in his hands and I had to be referred on to mental health services.

Without boring you with all the details, I have been passed backwards and forwards between primary care, community mental health services and my GP and still seem no nearer to even getting on the waiting list for CBT. This pass-the-parcel themed party, at which I am a most miserable guest, has been going on since October and is certainly not doing my mental health any good.

This anecdotal evidence

of my disempowering and infuriating experiences has relevance to disability politics more generally. It is suggestive of a continued lack of responsiveness to patients' own expertise, whilst also demonstrating how referral criteria and bureaucratic wranglings can operate as barriers to accessing appropriate services. Budgets are tight, and likely to get tighter, and services are all too willing to pass the buck if there is any possibility that a patient with expensive needs can be referred elsewhere. This reality must be challenged if health services are to better respond to the needs of those who know their own conditions best – patients themselves.

INFORMATION

Mind is running the "we need to talk" campaign, calling for better access for psychological therapies for all. More details at mind.org.uk/campaigns_and_issues/we_need_to_talk

politics

No winners in access survey

Paul Carter

Accessibility to voting for disabled people failed to show any significant improvement at the last general election, with over two thirds of polling stations still inaccessible, according to the findings of a survey by a disability charity.

The Polls Apart campaign, conducted by Scope, which publishes *Disability Now*, used a survey to gather the experiences of disabled voters at almost 1,000 polling stations across the UK, and found that 67 per cent included one or more barriers to voting.

The survey asked respondents to rate the accessibility of their polling station based on 17 questions covering areas including physical access, accessibility of information, attitudes of staff and the ability of disabled people to vote in secret or with assistance.

The figure marks an increase of just one per cent in the number of polling stations that were found to be accessible at the 2006 general election, suggesting that progress towards improving access to the electoral process for



disabled people has significantly stalled.

The charity said that examples of access problems reported in the survey results included wheelchair-users who had to vote in the open air because there was no ramp provided in the polling station, along with voters who encountered negative attitudes from polling station staff.

Many local authorities were also still using sites for polling stations that were inaccessible to wheelchair-users, such as temporary cabins or caravans in fields.

The most common access barrier encountered was the failure to provide either a

tactile voting device or a large print version of the ballot paper, both of which are legal requirements under the Representation of the People Act 2000.

Scope is now calling for the introduction of online voting to improve access to what it calls the "overstretched and inflexible" system currently in place.

More than a third of disabled people (35 per cent) interviewed for Scope's report said they would prefer voting

online, while postal voting was listed as the least popular option.

Ruth Scott, Scope's Director of Policy and Campaigns, said: "Britain's archaic voting system is stretched to breaking point. It has been failing disabled voters for some time and, as we saw during the last General Election with scores of people queuing outside polling stations, it isn't working for other voters either.

"Nothing has changed to significantly improve access at polling stations and for postal voting over the last decade. There is a pressing need for clearer accountability over how elections are run, to help improve the accessibility of current voting methods, as well as expanding these to include new options. Unless this happens disabled people will continue to struggle to exercise their right to vote.

"In a digital age where people can vote by text for the *X-Factor* or bank online, they should have the choice to vote over the internet."

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mediawatch

Larging it on *Big Brother*

You know it is officially summertime when Davina McCall is on the telly, bursting blood vessels shouting over the roar outside Elstree studios. Of course we can only be talking about the one, the only, *Big Brother*. With the final series of Britain's original reality television show underway, **Cathy Reay** explores the representation of disability through the *Big Brother* lens

Originally hailed as a breakthrough in television programming, *Big Brother* has seen a huge decline in popularity in recent years and is now in its very last run.

Unlike before, housemates in series 11 were chosen by *Big Brother* from a pool of hopefuls that waited eagerly outside the house during the live opening ceremony of the programme. Steve Gill was one of the three visibly disabled people in waiting, positioned at the front of the crowd. As he couldn't ascend the steps leading into the house, many viewers suspected that his inclusion was not a surprise, despite the programme's insistence none of the entries were pre-planned.

Having lost both legs and an eye fighting in Northern Ireland in the 1980s, Steve returned to Leicester to start a family and now has eight children with his second wife. He is also a transatlantic yacht racer.

Thanks to the sailor's positive, can-do outlook,



CHANNEL 4

bookies have placed him third to win the contest. While some viewers have posted comments on the *Big Brother* and BBC Ouch! messageboards saying that his high-achieving could make it look like he's trying to be "normal", which isn't necessarily representative of all disabled people, most initial reactions seem positive.

How Steve acquits himself

on the show is impossible to predict, but it isn't always so easy for disabled contestants to "just get on with it". Darnell Swallow, who appeared in the 2008 series, was often seen complaining to his housemates about the way society treated his albinism and when he left the house in fifth place he told *Disability Now* that housemates lied when they told him they didn't notice

his pale skin (*Up Close & Personal*, November 2008).

Meanwhile, radio presenter Mikey Hughes came second in the same series, losing out on the cash prize by just two per cent of the vote. His cheeky witticisms, amenable manner and placid nature made him a favourite among his housemates and the voting public. Later on in the series viewers admitted to finding some of his habits annoying, such as eating with his hands. The fact that people were irritated by aspects of Mikey's personality indicated his disability had been forgotten and that they were treating him, for perhaps the first time, just like any other contestant.

In contrast with Darnell, on his exit from the show Mikey said that blind viewers thanked him for "showing that blind people are normal". "It was visionary thinking to let me go on and not some stereotypical blind person. Channel 4 [said] I've put blindness decades forward. For too long, disability has been segregated," he told

Disability Now (Mikey: I'm a national hero, Oct 08).

Meanwhile, on *Celebrity BB*, short-statured actor Verne Troyer entered the house. Famous for playing "Mini-Me" in the *Austin Powers* films, Verne divided public opinion. Some of his housemates and the show's fans described the 2'8" actor as "cute" and "cuddly" but others said he shouldn't get "special attention" because of his short-stature. Though the favourite to win the series, Verne came in fourth place. And how can anyone

forget the incredibly likeable singer Pete Bennett, the first disabled housemate to enter the *Big Brother* house in 2007? Pete's eventual win was seen as exploitation by some disability bodies including the Tourette Syndrome Association, as many viewers appeared to vote for him because they found him endearing.

Through the variety of disabled contestants *Big Brother* has placed in the house, it seems that viewers' reactions veer from unintentionally patronising

or affectionate (Verne, Pete) to critical or dismissive (Darnell, Verne) and, finally, pretty regular (Mikey, Steve?).

It could just be down to the individual's own acceptance of their condition or the reactions of their fellow housemates, but something Mikey told us recently really rang a bell: "If you win and you're disabled it's because of

your disability, if you lose and you're disabled it's because of your disability. Disability is only one part of [sic] our personalities."

What is clear to us, whether Steve Gill wins or loses, is that the number of disabled contestants that have graced the *Big Brother* house have gone a long way to normalise disability on television. And surely that can only be a good thing.

What do you think of Steve Gill? Is it good that he's in the *Big Brother* house for the final season? Do you think the variety of disabled contestants through the years has changed society's view of disability? Have your say at www.disabilitynow.org.uk (search term "big brother")



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Flexible working: **everyone's a winner**



With the “back to work” agenda firmly on the coalition Government’s welfare reform radar, **Penny Batchelor** argues that extending flexible working would benefit everyone

So our coalition Government is getting into the swing of cuts. It hasn’t taken very long for the new Work and Pensions Secretary, Iain Duncan Smith (*pictured*), to turn to the popular subject of getting disabled people off benefits and back into work.

For a quick burst of popularity from the chattering classes it’s an easy hit. Go down the pub on a Friday night (if you can afford a pint and can find an accessible bar with a disabled loo) and you’ll find someone whingeing about a neighbour who doesn’t work and has the cheek to get a brand new car on Motability.

Yet right now there’s an opportunity to move the “back to work” agenda on from these same tired old stereotypes. That’s the previous Government’s proposal to extend flexible working arrangements to everyone.

You can currently legally request flexible working if you have a disabled child under 18, but not if you are a disabled adult yourself. It doesn’t make sense.



“Impairments don’t magically disappear on an 18th birthday – they ebb and flow throughout our lives”

Impairments don’t magically disappear on an 18th birthday – they ebb and flow throughout our lives.

When the election was in full swing I contacted the two main parties to ask if

they’d introduce legislation allowing disabled people the right to request flexible working in their job. In true politician style, both replied saying they support disabled people but also completely avoided answering my question.

It’s not rocket science. Most of us who are disabled are expert project managers. We juggle GP and hospital appointments, medication, pain, tiredness, physio... and the rest. Working flexibly, whether that’s from

home, part-time or a mixture of both, with a supportive employer, would transform our ability to work by fitting it round our needs. We have a lot to offer.

I’ve been in this situation myself. When I have contacted companies who have advertised a full-time position and explained that I would like to apply for it on a flexible, part-time or job share basis I’ve been told an outright no. Even the Government and its agencies, which are so keen to state that disabled “people need to be recognised as dynamic, active participants in the economy, not as static, passive recipients of cash transfers” haven’t given me a second thought when I’ve explained my skills and experience and have been honest about my medical needs.

The 21st century job market should move on from the five day week in an office created in the Victorian era for the emerging fit, male middle classes. This new Government has the power to legislate in order to improve the lot of those of us who want to work but find the door to permanent employment firmly shut. I can only hope that they will go through with it.

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At the end of South Africa's rainbow

Most people's memory of World Cup 2010 in South Africa is likely to be, not the football, but the rasping buzz of the vuvuzela. But disabled people are hoping for a more tangible legacy according to **Muzi Nkosi**, Chair of Disabled People South Africa

I got involved in disability politics as a youngster in 1981 when I became disabled. At that time, living in the township of Soweto, as young people we were fighting the apartheid government. But also, as disabled people, we came together and we decided, let's form ourselves into a

movement, an organisation which would fight for and champion the rights of disabled people. And that became what is now Disabled People South Africa (DPSA).

Life for disabled people during the time of apartheid was extremely difficult. It was double discrimination.

Not only was I discriminated against through apartheid as a black person, but also I was discriminated against as a disabled person, because I couldn't access the environment. I didn't even have access within my own home. It would have needed a lot of renovation for me to be able to move around.

So, both as black people and as disabled people we were discriminated against socially, politically and economically. You couldn't access employment as a disabled person back then.

Having founded this organisation, we went on in 1982 to hold the DPSA congress. A lot of people

attended that congress which showed the need for establishing a movement which would speak with one voice.

Now, with the World Cup going on, people are recognising South Africa as this Rainbow Nation. From my point of view, disabled people are now part of that Rainbow Nation.

Since the arrival of that icon Nelson Mandela, opportunities have opened up for us. People tended to shy away from the apartheid regime, shy away from the apartheid thinking and that led to a willingness for greater inclusion of disabled people.

But, for the disability sector, there were still some challenges which are still there now. If I may make an example with public transport, in South Africa we don't have an accessible public transport system. And while, in a city like Durban, they introduced integrated buses on which anyone could ride, we hoped that this might help solve our problem. But it hasn't.

Elsewhere, throughout South Africa, disabled people are facing a lot of challenges with regard to employment and quite a lot of other issues which still affect us.

A report on the place and status of disabled people in South African society was recently published, following

research conducted at the University of Johannesburg. It showed that disabled people here are still considerably marginalised. Some of them are living in real poverty because they are not claiming benefits to which they may be entitled

“Too many disabled South Africans are still not employed and don't have access to employment. We're asking the Government to address that problem”

due to lack of awareness of their entitlement or even that the benefit exists.

While what the report says is, to a great extent, true and accurate – a lot of disabled people are denied fundamental human rights and it's also true that many of them will not be getting benefit which is due to them – for me, as I've said, the more important challenges are to do with real equality in an economic sense. Too many disabled South Africans are still not employed and don't have access to employment. We're asking the Government to address that problem. So we're engaged in political thinking and political activity

to get better access for disabled people to become part of the workforce. But the Government is still far from meeting that challenge.

Opportunities for change are certainly there because in South Africa today we've got very good legislation like the Employment Act of 2008 which advocates for the employment of disabled people. So the opportunities are there, but the challenge is for government and companies both to demonstrate a commitment to the employment of disabled people. And they need to be willing to show that commitment by employing more disabled people. So for me it's to do with attitudes, we've got legislation, we've got a very good constitution, but companies are not observing it.

Of course, South Africa is a very diverse nation with lots of different racial and ethnic groups. To some extent this is reflected in the disabled people's movement. But disabled people's organisations tend more to be divided in terms of the services their members need. So people are more likely to group together according to their impairment and the types of support they'll need.

But what we've done recently in South Africa –

and it's been running for two years now – is form what we call the South African Disability Alliance. It's comprised of all these different organisations in the country coming together to speak with one voice, trying to develop a common agenda so that when we approach government we do so with one agenda and with one voice.

It's always difficult to make a generalised statement, but from my point of view as a wheelchair user I'd say that life is not very accessible here. There are still too many places where I simply cannot get in with my wheelchair. About 50 per cent of places are not very good like that. Maybe another 40 per cent are trying to get better, especially for people who live in cities. But it's still true that, as a wheelchair user, if I don't have a car, how can I travel to my workplace or to town without accessible public transport?

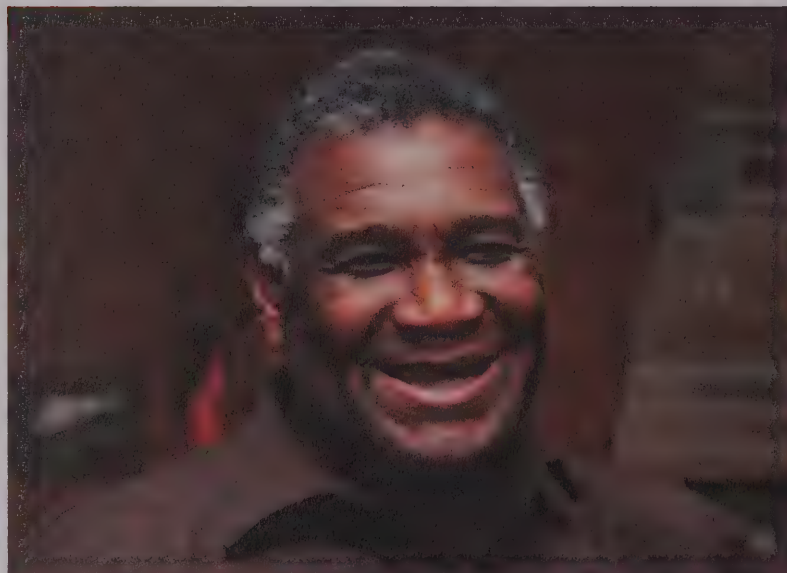
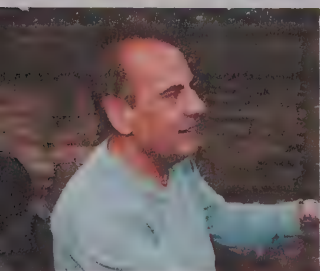
I would hope that out of this World Cup would come, from the experiences of people visiting from other countries, something that this Government can learn from and perhaps come up with a pilot project which would then be used. That's what I'd like to see as an aftermath of this World Cup.

• Muzi Nkosi was talking to Ian Macrae

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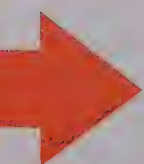
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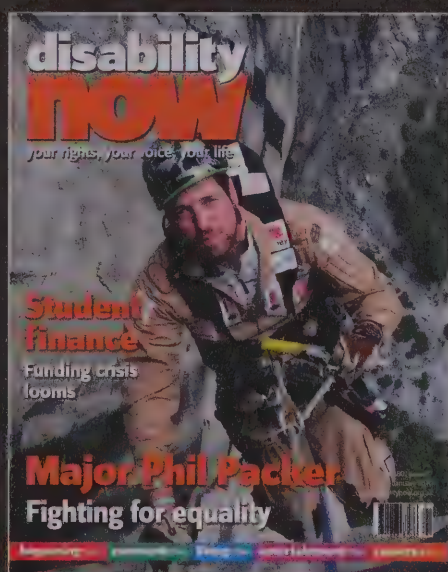
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Conversation with a **conservationist**

From childhood birdwatcher to global eco-campaigner, Dr Stuart Butchart has been on quite a journey. Since becoming disabled, his travels have become even more adventurous. He talks to Sunil Peck about hair-raising river crossings, close encounters with gorillas and his battle to keep the planet and things which live on it alive

I had to cross a hundred metre-long rope suspension bridge over a raging torrent and then trek for several miles through lowland swamp forest in the middle of the rainy season. I knew that there was no wheelchair access and I couldn't do it on my own. The reaction of local guides I asked was 'you can't possibly go there, it's hard enough for people who aren't in wheelchairs'. So I had to appear super-confident and say that I did this sort of thing all the time and that it was standard procedure - while worrying that they were right and it was going to be impossible."

Dr Stuart Butchart is telling me about one of the first trips he made as a conservation scientist after becoming a wheelchair-user after

being shot in the back by bandits in Guatemala who stole his camera and binoculars in January 2001. It was to see a rare species of bird called the Grey-necked Picathartes. He remembers approaching the trip with trepidation, but also being driven by the determination to succeed.

"It took us a week to get to the breeding caves (it normally takes people a day and a half) and involved scrambling up cliff faces, squelching through muddy swamps, and crossing rivers balancing one wheel on a plank of wood with the other held in mid-air by the guides below who were up to their necks in raging water."

Dr Butchart is Global Research and Indicators Coordinator at BirdLife International, a global partnership of

national environmental organisations like the UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

A rare breed himself, Dr Butchart is one of a tiny handful of disabled conservationists. He says that shortly after becoming disabled he found out about another wheelchair-user who ran a conservation programme in Cambodia.

"To know that someone was doing that kind of work in a developing country where I knew how challenging and wheelchair unfriendly it could be was definitely an inspiration to me. A few years ago I met him at a conference and it was fascinating and fun to swap experiences."

Now aged 38, his interest in biology was initially sparked by his grandfather who showed him a grey-brown Spotted



“We were working in these fragments of forest and every time you came to the forest edge you could see the devastated landscape beyond with just a few stumps of trees looking like skeletons”

Flycatcher in the garden when he was six.

“Then I started exploring the areas around where we lived in Lincolnshire and discovered some gravel pits when I was eleven or twelve. I’d cycle there and crawl under barbed wire fences to watch wildlife and learn about the species that were there.”

But his conservation career began to

take off when he was studying zoology at university and he organised conservation expeditions in summer holidays to Indonesia, Peru and Paraguay where he saw for himself the devastation being inflicted on the planet for the sake of financial profit.

It was a trip to Paraguay in 1992 which opened his eyes to what he describes as the “parlous state of the planet”.

“Most of eastern Paraguay was once covered in rain forest that went all the way down to the coast in southeast Brazil. Over 98 per cent has been destroyed, so all that’s left are tiny patches in the middle of large cattle ranches. We were working in these fragments of forest and every time you came to the forest edge you could see the devastated landscape beyond with

just a few stumps of trees looking like skeletons left from where the forest had been burnt and cleared. The land had been cleared to graze cattle for beef exports, largely to Europe.”

He went on to study for a PhD where he specialised in animal mating systems before going to work for BirdLife International.

Dr Butchart has spent the last few months on secondment to the United Nations Environment Programme, where he’s been working with scientists from universities and organisations around the world to compile a report on the extent to which governments have met targets set in 2002 to cut the loss of the planet’s wildlife by 2010.

He’s the lead author of the report and his findings are discouraging to say the least.

“The rate at which nature is being destroyed has been more or less constant for the past few decades. Although we’re putting in place some appropriate responses, they are woefully inadequate. We’ve lost 20 per cent of the world’s mangroves in the past couple of decades, 30 per cent of our sea grasses and even common species like the farmland birds I remember from my childhood have declined by almost 50 per cent in the past 30 years as a consequence of agricultural intensification.”

But at a time when so many people are worried about cuts to public services and losing their jobs, is the environment really that important? Given his background, you’d expect Dr Butchart to say that it is. But he does put forward a compelling case.

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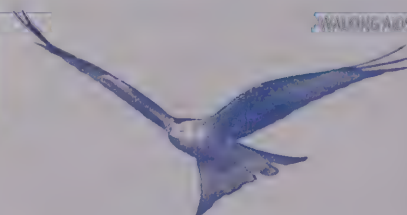
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Anyone who works in conservation has to be an optimist according to Dr Butchart, and he says that the situation is definitely redeemable as long as we act quickly and substantially scale up our responses.

"There are plenty of examples that show that we can turn things around. In recent years there are 16 bird species that would have become extinct globally were it not for conservation actions that staved off threats and helped to build up their populations. The rate at which the Amazon is being chopped down has been halved over the past decade through tougher legislation too."

Although Dr Butchart frequently travels abroad for meetings, conferences and workshops, he has fewer opportunities for field trips than before his injury. But he grabs the chance to experience wildlife for pleasure whenever he can, even though he is not always sure what adventures this will lead him into.

Take his trip to visit the mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda.

We've lost 20 per cent of the world's mangroves in the past couple of decades, 30 per cent of our sea grasses and even common species like the farmland birds I remember from my childhood have declined by almost 50 per cent

"The gorillas are completely habituated to people, being guarded all day long and visited by tourists daily, so they normally ignore visitors. But when I went, they'd never seen a wheelchair before.

You're supposed to stay a few metres away from them to avoid the risk of

disease being transmitted from humans to the gorillas. But one female kept coming forward and was fascinated by my chair. At one point she came and touched my foot and then sat back down and scratched her head. It's easy to anthropomorphise these things, but it did look as though she was wondering what on earth I was doing there sitting in a wheelchair in her territory high up in the mountains in a totally inaccessible rain forest. Then the male came over – the heaviest and most powerful individual known in any gorilla family group in the world. He stood a few feet away and stared right into my face. At that point the guides and guards nervously hooked their arms underneath mine to pull me out of the chair backwards in case he became aggressive. But after eyeing up me and my titanium chair, he relaxed, grunted and pushed his way past me."

When his busy schedule permits, Dr Butchart volunteers for the Back Up Trust, a charity which runs skiing, sports, drama and other courses for people with spinal injuries. His disability has also led to a friendship



with the BBC journalist Frank Gardner who like him sustained spinal injuries after being shot.

Frank Gardner describes Dr Butchart as an inspiration whose advice was a source of support during his rehabilitation.

"Once we met up I was immediately impressed by his can-do approach and obvious determination to continue enjoying an outdoor active life as well as his pursuit of birdwatching in far-flung places, an interest which we share. Like others I have been fortunate to meet, Stuart makes light of his injury and gets on with living life to the full."

Dr Butchart's immediate priorities are to continue to strive to make a difference for the planet with his scientific and conservation work, seeking to raise awareness, change



government policy and halt the decline of biodiversity.

The next significant milestone on that quest will happen in Japan in October when governments will convene once more to agree on how to tackle the loss of biodiversity over the coming decade.

He says he has no plans to traverse any more rope suspension bridges in the near future, but is looking forward

to a trip in August to the Pantanal in southern Brazil which is a swamp the size of France teeming with wildlife.

"We should see some interesting birds and mammals there. It's the best place in the world to see jaguar. You can go out in dugout canoes to find them resting up on riverbanks in the heat of the day, and can sometimes get pretty close to them. I'm looking forward to it." ■

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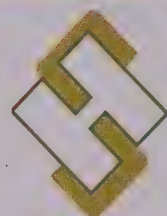
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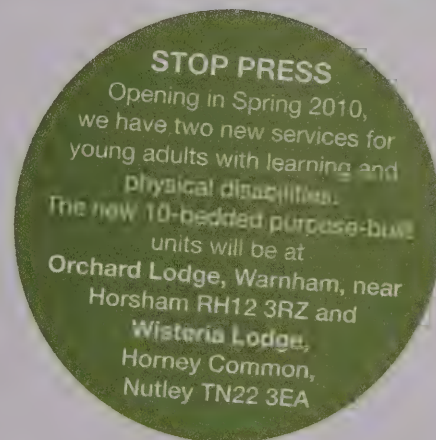
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Orchard Lodge, Dorking Road, Warnham, West Sussex RH12 3RZ

Orchard Lodge, just outside Horsham, West Sussex, provides care for adults with learning and physical disabilities. This specialist care home with nursing combines the latest technological facilities with a safe and comfortable environment. Activity rooms are available to all service users along with sensory and physiotherapy rooms. Hydrotherapy services are available in the swimming pool and spa with multi-purpose rooms for structured activities.

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On



James Bu

the buses

After a surprisingly affirmative experience boarding a bus on her scooter, **Emma Bowler** asks whether we're headed towards more accessible public transport. It's a journey on which she also encounters something of a paradox

Every day thousands of people get on and off buses without giving it a second thought. While I've driven hundreds of thousands of miles, flown all over the world, taken the train, been on boats, tuk tuks and horse and carts on my own but I'd never dared catch a bus solo on my mobility scooter.

Although "at one" with my disability I feel uncomfortable when it becomes the focus of attention in a public arena and using buses seemed fraught with the possibility of this happening.

Would the driver notice me and willingly help me? What would I look like when I was left "Nelly no mates" at the stop because the ramp didn't work? Would everyone hate me for holding up the bus while the driver got the ramp out and so on.

Transport service providers are obliged, under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, to make "reasonable adjustments" if their services are not fully accessible to disabled people. But it's also clear that being a disabled bus-user isn't necessarily a positive experience.

Wheelchair-user Vanessa Rumble finds using buses is a bit hit and miss.

"There are some good drivers out there but there are others who just don't know how to park the bus in order for the ramp to work. There are also those whose disability awareness

training is sadly lacking – I have been asked by a driver 'Isn't there specialist transport for people like you?'"

In spite of the possibility of such a negative experience happening to me it was the credit crunch that finally forced me to confront my final travel frontier.

I'd organised a trip to London and realised that getting around by cab was going to cost me a fortune. There was nothing for it – I was going to have to bite the bullet and get on a bus otherwise I'd be drinking lime and soda all weekend instead of quaffing nice wine, and that would never do.

Having successfully negotiated my train trip up to London I braced myself for my "bus challenge". I had used an online journey planner to work out which bus I needed, the times it might arrive and referred to a map to see exactly where the stop was. This advanced planning certainly eased my anxiety; I found the stop and saw my bus number was on it, so far so good.

The first thing that caused me to relax slightly was that people in the queue seemed to be looking out for clues as to whether I wanted to board the bus they were getting on, some even asked me outright if I needed a hand.

When my bus arrived the driver seemed to be trying to ignore me but being a "now or never" moment I requested the ramp. It was broken.

Wheelchair-user Keith Gray tells me: "There was a time when the ramps always worked whereas now there's always a possibility that it won't. Sometimes the ramp just won't come out; other times it can't settle on the kerb and goes straight back in. I have a feeling they are getting a bit slack on the maintenance which is needed as the ramps get older."

On the subject of dodgy ramps a Transport for London [TfL] spokesperson told me: "Transport for London takes the issue of accessibility very seriously. Wheelchair ramps are not an optional extra on London's buses – they must be working before a bus leaves its garage. TfL do carry out audits to check the ramps are working and there's been a marked improvement in recent years."

TfL say that if you encounter problems with a wheelchair ramp you should contact their Customer Services giving details about where and when the problem occurred.

Luckily for me that "Nelly no mates left on the kerb" moment was short-lived as literally the next bus was "my" bus again. This time the extremely obliging driver put the ramp out, I positioned myself in my slot and off we went. I'd done it!

My next conundrum was how was I supposed to inform the driver that I wanted to get off? If I pressed the button next to the wheelchair space





would that mean the driver knew I, specifically, wanted to get off? I started to work out whether I could get to the front of the bus and back to my scooter before being hurled to the floor as the bus lurched forward or stopped.

I picked my moment just as a traffic light went red; I wobbled to the front and told the driver where I wanted to get off. When we arrived he promptly put the ramp out and I was away. I felt like going back and saying "thank you so much for making my first solo bus journey so fabulously wonderful" but I thought he might think it a tad over the top. I did however celebrate with a cocktail!

Actually it felt slightly silly to have avoided this moment for so long but I really had to be pushed into this situation in order to do it. My reticence is not unusual. Federico Moscogiuri, Head of Policy and Campaigns for Arthritis Care, tells me: "A lack of confidence in being able to get to where you want to go without excessive difficulties or discomfort holds many disabled people back from even attempting to use public transport. This self-imposed confinement is the result of external obstacles such as poor

information, lack of seating or access at bus stops, or negligent behaviour, for instance drivers failing to stop close to the kerb."

A recent article in *Arthritis News* says that according to the Department for Transport the national average is that nearly six out of 10 buses are low-floor and wheelchair accessible – although including figures for London, where all 8,500 buses now have a wheelchair space, makes things look better than they are in many places outside the capital.

So while there has been an improvement in the accessibility of buses the unpredictable nature of bus travel and availability of accessible buses still holds disabled people back from using them. By 2017 all buses are required to be wheelchair accessible, which may help matters.

Other useful developments are also underway. For example, all 8,500 London buses now have iBus audio information – though it's all too often not working or switched off – and on-bus passenger information displays. These can be particularly useful for blind and partially sighted travellers and hearing impaired passengers, as

well as for people on unfamiliar routes.

One regular blind bus-user, Emma, says: "iBus is very clear, understandable and massively useful. If it isn't on I always approach the driver to make sure they didn't just turn it off because it was bugging them."

She suggests a potential future development. "Another improvement would be if something outside the bus or on the bus stop called out the number of the approaching bus. It's annoying to have to poke your head in and ask the driver when the rest of the process can be done independently."

As access improves, another mildly paradoxical problem is emerging. Keith Grey explains: "There are definitely more wheelchair-users using the bus routes I use which is a problem when there is only one wheelchair space on each bus. It is now increasingly likely that there is another wheelchair-user waiting to get on the bus, or one already on the bus, I want to get. They are going to have to look at increasing the number of wheelchair spaces on the buses."

As the cost of public transport and petrol prices continue to rise, bus travel, which is free to many disabled people, becomes an increasingly appealing option. There's still some way to go before disabled people can be assured of a smooth journey but at least we seem to be heading in the right direction. ■

What's public transport like where you live? Are the buses, trams, overground and underground trains accessible in your town or city? How well are you served if you live in a rural area? LET US KNOW – email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk
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yourviews

Personalisation: the sugar pill of cost cutting

I'm glad Peter White hasn't swallowed the line on personalisation pushed by its supporters ("Pete's Place: Chickens coming home to roost", *Disability Now*, April 2010).

Like Peter, I've attended "visioning days", with the promise that these events would tell us all we need to know about personalisation. They didn't.

We've been asked to believe that, with personalisation, we can ask for anything that will improve our lives and it will be given. The reality is that personalisation is being brought in to reduce the cost of care provision and save councils money.

Individuals ("customers" in personalisation-speak) needing care may be able to make their own choice, but the funding will be awarded on the basis of assessment and points.

I've heard rumours that individuals will be issued with a directory that lists all the available services and options, presumably accompanied by the number of points needed to purchase them (anyone remember Green Shield stamps?) – not ideal for anyone who has difficulty dealing with



large amounts of text or understanding social services jargon.

And if customers will be expected to make their own choices from the directory, they'll need to be able to compare and evaluate the available options, as well as work out which service, equipment or care provider will be of most benefit to them, and calculate the cost – not easy to do without experience or knowledge of different services.

As a social worker who works with visually-impaired people, I don't claim to know what's best for anyone, and I always stress to my clients that they're free to turn down any equipment I demonstrate to them or

service I offer them, and that I'm there only to tell them what's out there – it's their choice.

If, as has been implied, the social worker's role begins and ends with the assessment, there must be an advocacy service, preferably made up of workers with specialist knowledge of disability, and already installed prior to the start of personalisation, to offer advice and guidance.

The ethos of personalisation also assumes that customers accept their circumstances and are realistic about their present and long-term needs. Those of us who've grown up with a disability are self-aware, accept that there are areas in life that

cause us problems, and have a good idea of what would make life easier.

But for people who've just acquired a disability, choices aren't that simple. It can often take time to accept that a disability is permanent, and be realistic about its implications. I've met people who expect that in a few weeks' time, after a bit of rehab, they'll be fully independent and problem free, while others lapse into depression and are unable to see themselves coping, now or in the future.

Personalisation, as it has been presented so far, doesn't allow for emotional adjustment or changes in acceptance.

I fear that personalisation is a poorly thought-out, quick-fit solution to the rising cost of providing adequate care and support to older and disabled people, and I worry – not for the sake of keeping my job – that "customers" not given enough specialist guidance and emotional support are at risk of making inappropriate choices that affect their future wellbeing.

Trish Talbot, by email

Dignity in Dying coexists with disability rights

Andy Rickell, ("Never mind the quality ... value the life", *Disability Now*, May 2010) claims: "The Dignity in Dying brigade aggressively talk up traditional negative stereotypes of disabled people to promote assisted suicide."

Dignity in Dying doesn't support assisted suicide for disabled people who aren't dying. We focus on the quality of death of dying adults in the final weeks and days of their life. We try to ensure they can have a good death rather than prematurely ending their life.

To suggest we use negative stereotypes to further

our campaign undermines the integrity of all those fighting to change the law.

Disability rights activists such as Lord Ashley and Lord Low have long been supporters and the public profile of campaigners like Debbie Purdy has only, in my view, promoted positive images of disabled people.

The campaign premise is choice and autonomy, just like the disability rights movement. I assure your readers it's quite possible to support disability rights and assisted dying for terminally ill adults.

Emily Halsall, Dignity in Dying, London W1

Cut VAT on car fuel

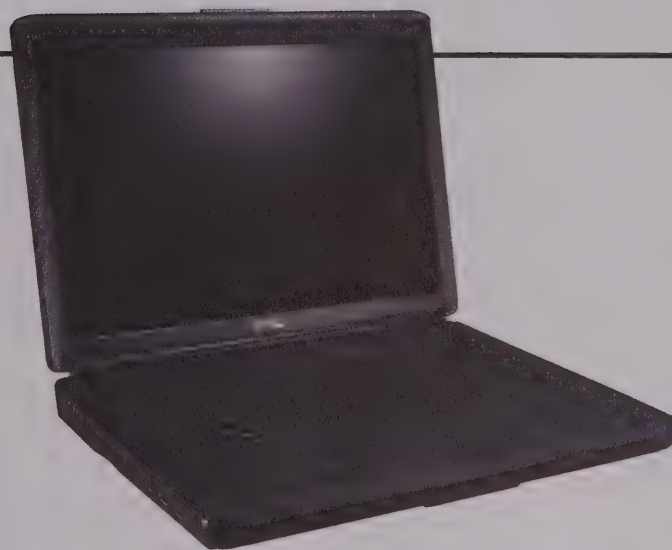
I agree with Helen Smith ("The case for a fuel rebate", *Disability Now*, June 2010) about the need for a rebate on one's fuel or at least the need to zero-rate the VAT element. I get all my spares and repairs done without paying VAT so why should I pay VAT on the fuel needed to run it?

When Dawn Primarolo was Treasury Secretary I was instrumental in getting the rules changed on cars adapted to carry a disabled person. Previously the rules were that you either had to sit in your wheelchair or be carried on a stretcher in

your car for it to qualify for zero-rating. After numerous letters explaining that I was being discriminated against because I could transfer from my chair to a seat, the rules were suddenly changed to what we have today.

I was one of the first in the North East to purchase a new car VAT free and had to tell the salesman at the garage how to zero-rate it. I've even produced my own Revenue & Customs form for the garage that does my servicing. If more people wrote to their MPs, we might get something done. So come on, get writing!

Denis Shaw, Grosmont, Whitby



A girl's best friend

Having followed your WebWatch section, I'd like to say that my computer is one thing I wouldn't be without, as it's my window to the world.

As someone with cerebral palsy, I can't write or speak normally and therefore find letter writing and speaking on the phone difficult, but with a computer the world is at my fingers because, for example, I can keep in touch with friends by email, go shopping, find out whatever I wish from the web and keep a photo album.

So many elderly people say they could never use a computer or worry that if they had one they might break it. To be honest I don't see how, as I've found

that there's always a way of putting things right. My sister is 86 and I'm 82 and we use one on a regular basis for a hundred-and-one things and find it a great help.

Because of my disability I can't always hit the right key so I've bought a key guard that can be removed in two seconds when someone else wants to use the computer. I never handle the mouse as I can't control it, but by switching on the numeric pad I can type what I like.

So to everyone who hasn't yet tried using a computer, I urge them to have a go. It's really not as painful as it looks.

Vera Dean, Wallingford, Surrey, by email

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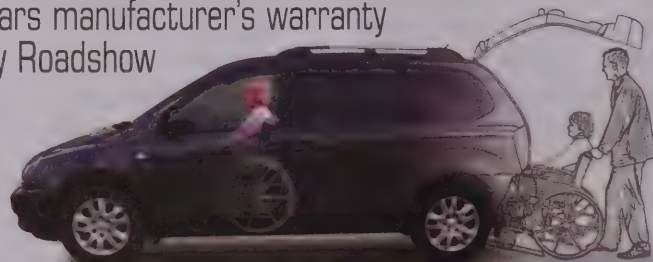
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mikeoliver



Cuts: a *really* radical approach

Disabled people are likely to be among the hardest hit by the recently announced government spending cuts. In his first regular column for us, **Mike Oliver** argues that the coalition should look much closer to home to make savings

Now we have a government, public expenditure cuts are inevitable.

Indeed some are already underway. Despite all the rhetoric about protecting frontline services disabled people will be hit in at least three ways. Firstly, there will be increases in the taxes we pay and our benefits may well be frozen or cut. Secondly, our access to frontline services will be severely restricted. Finally, the organisations that are supposed to give voice to our concerns and anger about this will have their grants cut.

If we accept that the Government has no choice but to agree to the cuts being proposed by a combination of failed bankers, economists who can't agree on what happened yesterday, let alone predict what might happen tomorrow, and fawning media commentators, then how should we go about it?

It seems only fair and logical to me that we should start with the most inefficient public

service of all – parliament itself. Every year it sets its own agenda by laying out its programme in the Queen's Speech. It never manages to meet its own targets and yet is never audited in the same comprehensive manner as other public services like health and education and penalised for any

As disabled people we can also come up with our own list of legislative failures; to deliver proper social care, to ensure inclusion in education and to end discrimination against us

inefficiencies discovered.

Additionally much of the legislation it churns out often turns out to be unenforceable. Think of things like banning people from using mobile phones while driving, controlling dangerous dogs and stopping foxes from being ripped apart by packs of

"non-dangerous" dogs. As disabled people we can also come up with our own list of legislative failures; to deliver proper social care, to ensure inclusion in education and to end discrimination against us.

Never mind the marginal changes currently being proposed. We don't need two chambers so let's abolish the House of Lords. Then we could insist that being a member of parliament is a full-time job and ban members from holding outside jobs, consultancies, directorships and the like. Next we could raise money by selling the Palace of Westminster to an international hotel chain or to the oil-rich middle east.

Finally we could build a new modern parliament using the private finance initiative – after all it's considered a good enough way to raise money for new

It seems only fair and logical to me that we should start with the most inefficient public service of all – parliament itself

hospitals and schools. We could save further costs by building it in the north where the price of land is cheaper.

People will accuse me of not understanding how parliament works – I agree but I do understand only too well why it doesn't work. According to the Government's own figures we spend £500 million a year on parliament. My radical and simple plan could cut that in half. Even if that's not enough, if our politicians were to adopt it, at least it would show that they are willing to share the pain with the rest of us.

→ Have your say

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- email us editor@disabilitynow.org.uk
- phone us 020 7619 7323

asktheexperts

you ask, they answer

I can't care for my husband any longer

Q I'm a carer and I'm in a very difficult position. Some 15 years ago my husband acquired a brain-injury and I've been caring for him ever since.

His behaviour has deteriorated significantly over the last two years. He drinks, won't go out, is aggressive and moody, won't take his medication or have showers, and keeps weapons in his van.

I still love him but can't live with him or care for him anymore, and would like to arrange a meeting with social care to explore our options. I feel terrible and sick to my stomach but I can't cope. What will happen next? Will social care understand? Will I be treated badly because I've failed? I'd be grateful for any advice you can give.

Name supplied, by email



Simon Parritt replies:

You're in a very distressing and emotionally challenging situation. You've had to

cope over the last 15 years with a major life-changing event. This has affected not just the man you love and married, but you, and you are left caring for a different person from the person you fell in love with. This makes the decisions you must now face, in both your interests, that much harder.

It would seem that something quite different has happened to your husband in the last two years. It may be that this

change is not wholly related to his original brain injury. His drinking, aggressive moods, poor personal care and unwillingness to take his medication point to an urgent need for professional input now rather than later. I urge you not to wait until things get worse.

I recommend that you first contact the original team that dealt with your husband's rehabilitation and treatment following his injury. They should be

understanding and point you in the right direction, if they couldn't help you themselves. I can't believe, despite the bad press social care receives these days, that they wouldn't be sympathetic to your situation. You might also try the helpline at Headway, the Brain Injury Association.

I also urge you not to feel guilty, and at least to try and live with your feelings, while you do what's best for both of you. He's

clearly at risk and unhappy, and if he has weapons in his van there's a potential serious risk to you, him and others. You really must seek urgent help before it becomes a criminal issue rather than a health issue.

You clearly love your husband. Doing the best for him may involve making some hard decisions for his and your future well being.

• The Headway website is headway.org.uk and its helpline is 0808 800 2244



GLADSKIKH TATIANA / SHUTTERSTOCK



Neighbours use my bay

Q What do you have to do to make a disabled parking bay enforceable? My local housing association has put a disabled parking space in our car park but won't enforce it. This has made my life hell as I keep getting blocked in and can't go anywhere unless I know whose car is blocking me. Then I end up getting a mouthful of abuse when I ask them to move their car. It has taken five years to get a disabled bay marked out; what can I do to get it enforced?
Lisa Wicks, by email

thoughtless people living near you, as the disabled space that's marked outside your home relies to a certain degree on people's goodwill.

There are basically two types of bays and the bay outside your house is just an advisory bay, which means that the council doesn't formally restrict other vehicles from parking in them.

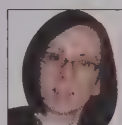
To enable this bay to be enforced would require a Traffic Regulatory Order (TRO). TROs can take a long time to implement and can cost a considerable amount of money, which in some areas local authorities are asking applicants to fund. I know that's not what you wanted to hear.

Helen Dolphin answers:

I'm sorry to hear you have such

How do I become an access consultant?

Q I'm a disabled person who's keen to build a career as an access assessor for employment, education and other access needs. Can you advise me where I may be able to obtain accreditation and training to become an assessor?
Harry Taylor, by email



Agnes Fletcher has this advice:

The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) is a registered charity and the leading authority and resource on inclusive design and access to the built environment for disabled and older people.

CAE provides access consultancy, training, publications and advice, plus a helpline for disability-related built environment issues, funded by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

It's also the administrative base for the National Register of Access Consultants (NRAC). NRAC is an independent register of accredited access auditors and access consultants who

meet professional standards and criteria established by a peer review system – and by the way, the terms “access auditor” or “access consultant” are the usual terms for the type of activity you're referring to.

NRAC is the only UK-wide accreditation service for individuals who undertake access auditing and access consultancy. As such, it's the place for you if you're serious about becoming an access auditor.

You can download an information pack and find out about the core competencies required for being an access consultant.

You say you're disabled, which is a good start, but you'll need the necessary technical knowledge of the area and this may mean spending some time and money before you're able to practise in this area.

It's in all our interests that those acting as access consultants know what they're talking about! Once qualified, you can go it alone or contact the many consultancies that offer access services.

Good luck!

→ If you have a question for our panel

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Dangerous card



The resignation of David Laws as Chief Secretary to the Treasury draws some interesting parallels with disability, says **Peter White**

I was intrigued by one reaction to the spectacular fall of David Laws, who resigned after he was shown to have claimed parliamentary expenses for the rent he paid to his live-in lover.

He said he'd not wanted to reveal the nature of the relationship to his family, and that the relationship wasn't on a par with that of a spouse.

Ben Summerskill of the gay rights campaigning organisation Stonewall said he felt it was inappropriate to attribute a clear breach of parliamentary rules to the fact of Laws' being gay, or to possible reactions to it; and suggested that this implication of anticipated discrimination did nothing for the cause.

I have to say this struck a chord with me in relation to disability. Disabled people know between ourselves there's tacit recognition of "playing the disability card": using your disability to get something you want. Some disabled people disapprove of this and see what a hostage it is to fortune; but I'd say they're

in a minority; and I certainly couldn't say with my hand on my heart that I've never done it: to explain work delivered late, to get a seat on a crowded train, to score a point in an argument.

But deep down, I know it's a dangerous game because it feeds into the very ignorance about disability we claim to hate.

To give just one example: I and other columnists for *Disability Now* often speak

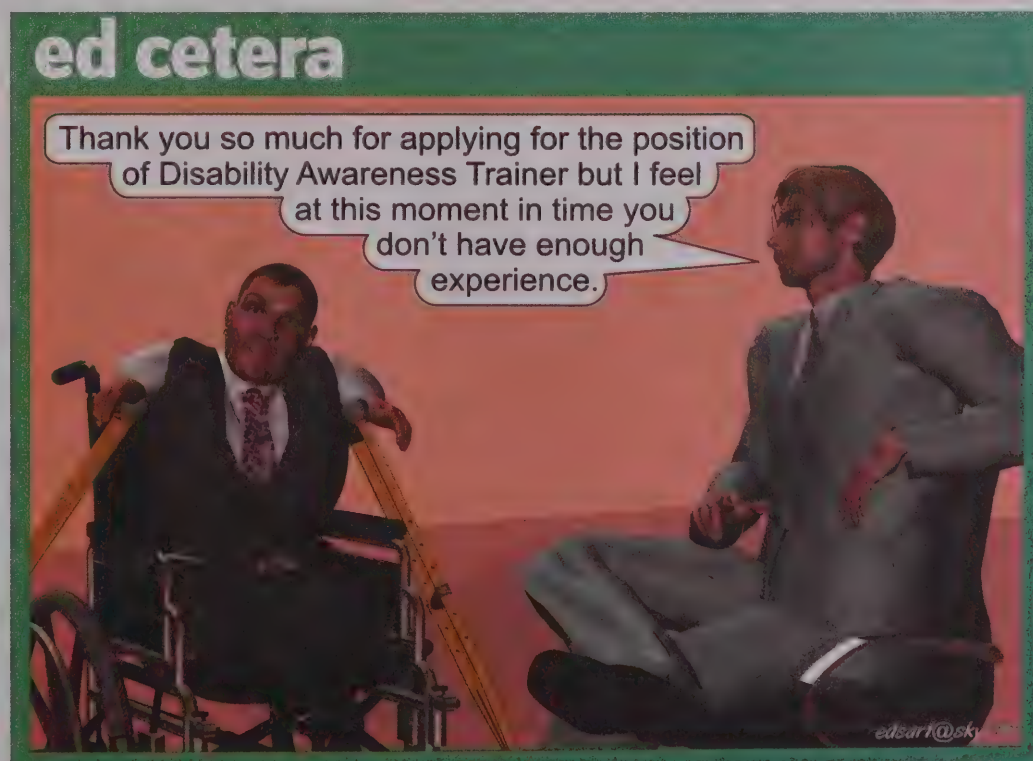
of our concern that governments confuse the fact that many unemployed disabled people want to work with the assumption that those who can't get work are in some sense not trying hard enough, or pleading disability as an excuse. In fact, there's a systemic problem and this is not, as some politicians like to hint, a case of mass-scrourging.

From what I hear from the new Government about more testing, and threats of benefit removal from those who fail these tests or won't take them, it seems the lesson has not been learned – despite recent research in Scotland where huge

numbers of cases where people were judged fit for work after testing were being reversed on appeal.

The truth is, politicians just don't get disability and fall for the simplistic line that if benefit figures aren't dropping, people must be very skilled at bucking the system! Not so. The truth is that the jobs aren't there, the support isn't there, and employers still baulk at taking on disabled people.

We could help by not falling into the trap of attributing everything that happens to us, including perceived discrimination, as relating to our disability. After all, we don't like it when they do it to us!



guestcolumn



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Come in if you can get in

In the access lottery, tickets to music and sporting events often make disabled people losers says would-be gad-about **Lisa Davies**

As an outgoing socialite whose primary mode of transport is a wheelchair, I have attended a significant number of concerts and sporting events throughout the UK. I have visited both small venues and large arenas and while access to many places has improved (these days I can at least get through the door of most buildings), there are occasions when I am still made incredibly nervous when making an enquiry about access. My previous experience of so-called accessible venues includes, but is not limited to, the use of an interior door as a ramp; this was scary even for me

I dislike the generally adopted use of the word 'carer' as a descriptor for anyone who may be with me on a given evening. The language does not even entertain the idea that I just may have friends

and is not an experience I will be rushing to repeat! I have also on occasion attracted the attention of several security guards when the person I was with dared to help me out of my chair in

an attempt to make my experience more enjoyable. He failed, we left early.

More recently I have dared to go out alone; this is due in part to economic constraints, and also to the fact that no one who loves me can stand my taste in theatre. My request for a single ticket at the exclusion of a carer space is usually greeted with mild shock by the operator. I dislike the generally adopted use of the word "carer" as a descriptor for

anyone who may be with me on a given evening. The language does not even entertain the idea that I just may have friends.

My personal irritations do not end with the booking process, there is of course the evening itself to navigate. I can no longer even pretend that references to "convoys", or "wacky races" are remotely funny when two or more wheelchair-users just happen to occupy the same space. However, several arena event stewards seem to think it is. A recent trend in arena design has meant that I have paid a considerable sum of money to stare at famous people through plate glass. This rather takes the shine off the "live" experience, and I hope this trend doesn't continue.

While many of you may upon reading this be thinking the obvious, I do of course have a choice which can be concisely summarised as, to go or not to go. In my mind this is a stark choice. Access, where it exists, is so standardised that as a wheelchair-user I know I will be closer to the ceiling than is usually sensible.

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Friend who gave food for thought



Champion of independent living and creator of the concept of accessible food, David Morris died in early May. His friend **Katherine Araniello** pays this personal tribute

David Morris was a close friend and someone who I will miss dearly. When David moved to Limehouse close to the Thames in London he often invited people to sing, read poetry and eat the amazing recipes that he concocted and which went by the name of his virtual restaurant project "Red Jesus". David was keen to create food that

met everyone's needs combining amazing flavours and accessibility to all: he created fantastic chicken stew, so that I could eat it with minimal effort (I'm not up to chewing). He was open to sharing his recipes and teaching me how to create dishes that were just as accessible. And best of all it was all served with champagne!

"Red Jesus" came from

David was keen to create food that met everyone's needs combining amazing flavours and accessibility. And best of all it was all served with champagne!

the view that David could see from his apartment, a church with a red figure of Jesus standing erect on the rooftops.

David's apartment was amazing and the panoramic view was incredible – stretching from the O2 Dome to the Millennium Wheel. He had a huge balcony on which people could wheel, an opportunity many disabled people could only dream of experiencing. A level of decadence looking down from the heights not normally afforded to disabled people from a penthouse apartment in the Limehouse skies. I feel that this is significant because it reminded us that we had all come a long way from the segregated institutions that many of us had been forced into through childhood. So to sit on David's balcony or in his apartment was a good feeling and certainly made

us feel very much part of the contemporary lifestyle that was so far removed from our earlier years.

David was probably one of the most generous people I know. He did not judge people depending on their status, he loved people and he had time for everyone irrespective of who they were. There were so many networks that David was involved with in his professional and private life. I first met David at a Liberty disability arts Festival and I remember simply saying I think you have the same disability as me – it was from that point onwards that we formed a close friendship. David was someone that I could talk to about anything. His films, my art, Personal Assistance nonsense and SMA stuff such as comparing who could open their mouth the widest!

I felt that I had a very strong bond with David and I'm so glad that I knew him. David had the ability to bring people together and instigate a "can do, will do" approach to any cause he supported. What we shared in common was art and creativity. We also shared an ironic look at the world and these are times which I will truly miss.

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Renault Kangoo 1.2 Petrol Authentique	P055 KNV	3 Seats, Ramp, Air Con	Yellow	11,125	7,495
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E & OE

Betty Jackson CBE is one of the UK's most celebrated fashion designers. With a multi award-winning career spanning almost four decades, **Lara Masters** asks amputee Betty how she survives the fashion industry so seamlessly

Betty Jackson was born in Bacup, Lancashire where her Dad owned a shoe factory. Complications at birth meant Betty's left leg didn't grow properly and at the age of six she had an amputation.

After studying fashion at Birmingham College of Art under the inimitable Zandra Rhodes, Betty started her career working for designer to the glitterati, Ossie Clark, in the late 70s.

"It was extraordinary meeting these hugely influential designers early on in my career, but when I left college I had the arrogance of youth and wanted very much to make my own statement. I don't think I was interested in doing anything that looked like anyone else's collection. It was important to stamp my own personality on my clothes. Mind you.... the early collections were quite bold and colourful, but not in the same way as Zandra or Ossie."

In contrast, Betty describes her personal dressing style simply as "black", but her collections are vibrant and eclectic.

"I get a lot of my ideas from colour and fabric but I'm mainly inspired by artists, so I do a lot of gallery visits and go to most exhibitions. London is a particularly inspirational city and often just the people on the street can be totally exciting.

And there are so many exciting new young designers emerging at the

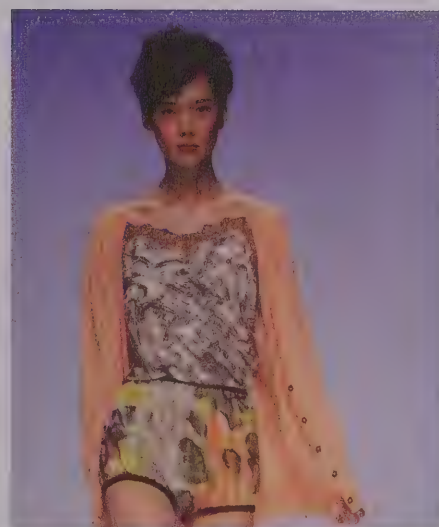
Fashion is Betty's bag



ANDREW LAMB



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ANDREW LAMB

moment producing really interesting work, but my all-time favourites will always be Japanese designers Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons."

Certainly, attributes of the quirky interpretations of classic pieces prominent with these designers are reflected in Betty's designing style, which she describes as: "Easy, relaxed, strong and sexy in an understated way."

Her creations are both comfortable on a catwalk but also very wearable, as Ms Jackson demonstrates: "My current fave piece of clothing is an oversized jacket we first did in 1986! I have it in black grosgrain with a black cotton lace trim on one side and wear it constantly. I also absolutely love my bag from this season's collection. It's a big, simple square shape in thick hide with raw edges and large silver clips on the handle...easily fits everything... and there's no logo on it. It's completely plain with the label on the inside. Perfect!"

I could talk clothes and accessories all day with such an industry icon but, ultimately, fashion is about aesthetics and I ask if having a disability has been a hindrance whilst carving a career in an image-orientated industry.

"I have an artificial left leg and use

a walking stick; I walk quite badly. Maybe it's more of a problem for other people. For me, it's not my body that counts... I use my brain when I'm working, not my legs!"

Whilst Betty may dismiss the impact of her body in her line of work, she accepts body-image is at the heart of the fashion industry and joined the British Fashion Council's Model Health Inquiry panel after two models died from eating disorders in 2006.

Maybe it's more of a problem for other people. For me, it's not my body that counts... I use my brain when I'm working, not my legs

"Everyone has a responsibility to promote healthy images of women, not just the fashion industry. When the inquiry was launched, it was quite obvious that the sports and dance world are much bigger transgressors than fashion, especially where eating disorders are concerned. At least we are taking steps to find a way to tackle the problem by working with the agencies and giving these girls,

especially the young ones, somewhere to get help."

Clearly, Betty feels bodies are somewhat of a distraction altogether; her passion is purely for the adornment of the physical form, so when I ask for any disability-related anecdotes, she brushes me off with; "Too many to mention!"

This tunnel-visioned dedication to her craft has made Betty Jackson one of Britain's most prolific designers with accolades including twice winning Designer of the Year, receiving an MBE (1987) and a CBE (2007) for services to British industry, launching the Autograph range at M&S and redesigning the gowns of the civil judiciary in 2008.

However, Betty tells me that none of these awards are for her most important work; "My greatest achievement is my children. But it's work in progress!"

And I can only think that with Betty's assiduity and ability to produce beautiful creations, her children are surely turning out to be pretty fabulous specimens too. ■

• bettyjackson.com
•• debenhams.com/designers/betty-jackson



Apulia appeal

Palm Sunday morning, and an old woman clutching an oversized olive branch makes her way down the lane to join a procession to church. Everyone is carrying a branch, so from a distance it looks like an entire olive tree migrating along the narrow street. It could be any southern Italian village, except that the church, the shops, restaurants, and every house in Alberobello centre is a trullo – ancient, dry stone dwellings whimsically topped with conical roofs and mystical signs painted on them. No one's quite sure why. It's like being on a film set of giant chess pieces. Once you get used to the dazzling white façades (they seem to have no shortage of decorators here) and the marble-shiny flagstone pavements, it's a delight to explore.

Somebody emerges from a low front door. "Buon giorno," she smiles, as if she's known me for years. Visitors are still treated as friends in Apulia (Puglia in Italian), on Italy's elegant boot heel, that struts proudly into the Adriatic, self-sufficient, seemingly as far from the rest of Europe as you can get. This is the original ecotourism. With its rural traditions and recipes based on organic wild ingredients, handed down

Puglia may be familiar to you from the labels on bottles of Italian wine, but it's also known as Apulia. It's attractions include uniquely quirky dwellings, finest olive oil and glorious regional food. But these may soon be joined by a statue of our own travel regular **Marion Bull**

from one generation to the next, the locals laugh at the thought. "We've been green all along!"

It's a gentle landscape, at its prettiest in spring and early summer, when poppies and ox-eye daisies cover the meadows. Uliveti, centuries-old wild

olive trees, so gnarled that they sprawl sideways, are surrounded by nets from the last shaking (October is harvest time). By the look of the trees, they can hardly take much more. But these produce some of the best organic olive oil anywhere. It's known as "liquid gold",



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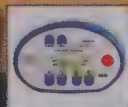
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Did you know?

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much revered for thousands of years, not only for food, but in medicinal and cosmetic uses. There is an olive oil museum in nearby Fasano, in an 11th century Benedictine monastery.

Some of the locals are proud to show visitors round their trulli – Alberobello is a Unesco World Heritage Site after all, and mass tourism still hasn't reached this far. But if you stay in a B&B trullo, a few surprises await: I didn't expect to need heating on when it was warm outside, but the massively thick limestone walls are built to keep it cool in summer and warm in winter. I woke up under one of the cones (they used to add cones over the years as the family grew) thinking I was in a rather posh cave. You have the dubious pleasure of tourists peering in at you. Still, it made me feel like a local, and the fantastic atmosphere in the Via Monte Nero, the main street, at night, with the trulli eerily lamplit, is worth staying for.

In the nearby L'Aratro restaurant, the owner, Domenico Laera explained every course.

"Our dishes are found nowhere else in Italy. We have a passion for our land and our family recipes," and then carried away by his own enthusiasm, he crescendo'ed, "and if you write about our little town, we'll build a monument to you!"

Here in the Itria Valley, three picturesque towns, Locorotondo, famous for its wines, Cisternino, voted one of Italy's best small towns, and Martina Franca, are a short drive away. South of Brindisi lies the city of Lecce, ➔



MARION BULL

Did you know?

Trulli originated in Mycenae, Greece, 5,000 years ago (Apulia was once part of Magna Graeca), but similar, earlier structures have also been found in Asia Minor.

the Baroque architecture capital of Italy.

Another type of accommodation found in Apulia is the masseria. These are elegant former country manor houses and farms, where both landowner and workers' families used to live. The celebrated Il Frantoio, near Ostuni, has an underground millstone olive oil press. Their organic extra virgin olive oil comes from the 180 acre estate. A former nobleman's house, less than half an hour's drive

from Alberobello, it has its own private beach, Lido Bizzarro, at nearby Torre Canne with thermal springs known for their healing properties. From here I visited the Roman site of Egnazia with its mosaic floors, and the old fishing port. I didn't make use of Il Frantoio's vintage car, which was just as well, as a fisherman presented me with a bucket of live octopus.

Still, it might have been handy. Il Frantoio's chef, the proprietor's wife, Rosalba, has been called a genius by the Italians. Expect something like 14 courses for lunch. If you are still awake by evening, the 16th century walled citrus garden is candlelit, perfumed by the heady scent of orange, lemon, and grapefruit blossom. It's almost too beautiful to leave.

Between here and Brindisi (the nearest airport to Il Frantoio) I visited Ostuni, known as the "white city" built on three hills, where old women still make pasta by hand in open doorways in medieval back streets. But I just had to return to the Alberobello to stay another night in a trullo.

"One cone or two?" said the owner when I arrived. You have to try to keep a straight face. ■

Information

Alberobello is one hour's drive inland from both Brindisi and Bari airports served by Ryanair and Alitalia.

Public transport is not accessible and non-existent in rural areas, so a hired car may be necessary. A train from Bari stops at Alberobello (a two-hour scenic journey). The station is 500m from Alberobello centre. Some UK operators offer tours of the region.

B&B/self-catering, self-contained Trulli (not accessible), Alberobello
Tel: 0039 080 432 3860
www.trullidea.com

Trullo Liliana (accessible) with accessible restaurant in the vicinity
Tel: 0039 392 426 6607
www.trullimania.com

In the countryside near Alberobello: Trullo La Difesa (accessible). Tel: 0039 080 439 5117, www.trulilovely.com

All trulli prices from approx. £30 per person per night.

Masseria Il Frantoio (not accessible; easy reach first floor rooms facing courtyard), Ostuni. Tel: 0039 083 133 0276. Prices vary seasonally, look for special offers, www.masserialilfrantoio.it

Masseria Torricella (accessible), Alberobello, 0039 080 930 9994
From £40 per person per night.

Useful website: www.agriturismo.it

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Keys to the lost and found

Ever played that cold, warm, hot, hotter hunting game? **Ian Macrae** has found an electronic equivalent which might take the luck out of looking for things

You're getting ready to leave the house, in a bit of a hurry and going through that checklist in your head. "Keys, wallet, phone, specs...specs! Where are my specs?"

Then it begins.

You may be the methodical mover of things, or start in on the frantic, frustrating and ultimately fruitless flinging of things about.

Whatever, whether or not you find the errant article will be a matter largely of luck.

But there are on the market gadgets which can make the looking and locating less of a lottery.

Known generically as electronic object locators, they work on the principle of one device sending a signal to another, causing it to make a noise. The receiving device is attached to specs, wallet, keys and the bleeping sound (together with a flashing LED) alerts you to where they are.

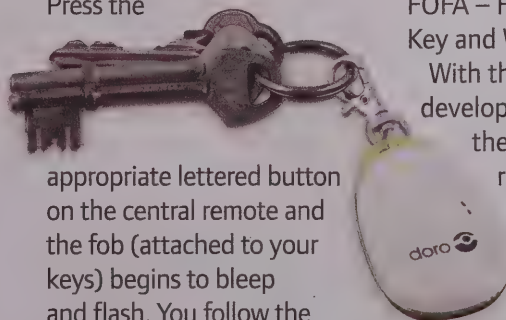
The gadgets come in two basic types.

First there are those which consist of a hand-



Above: FOFA; below: Doro MemoryPlus

held transmitter (like a remote control) and a number of fobs tuned to receive its signal. Each fob is coded with a letter and can be attached to a given article (keys, wallet, specs again). Press the



appropriate lettered button on the central remote and the fob (attached to your keys) begins to bleep and flash. You follow the sound or locate the LED and Bob's your proverbial, or, more appropriately maybe, eureka!

The one we tried is the Doro MemoryPlus 335 and it certainly did its job. However, the remote

transmitter is quite large – so the system's not that portable, and the question always hangs in the air, what do you do if the thing you're unable to find is the remote?

Enter from left field, the FOFA – Find One Find All – Key and Wallet finder.

With this system, developed in the States, there's no central remote transmitter.

Instead, each of the fobs is capable of talking to the others.

Example. Let's say you're wearing your sunglasses and need to locate your keys. The product comes with a fob on a double ended lanyard which can be attached to your shades. You press the appropriate button

(one of six) on this fob and it sends a signal to a similar one attached to your keys. The keys fob begins to bleep and flash enabling you to hunt it down.

Out of the box you have to programme each fob with its number, but that's an easy matter of pressing the relevant button.

You also have to remember (or note down) which numbered fob is attached to which of your belongings to avoid frustration.

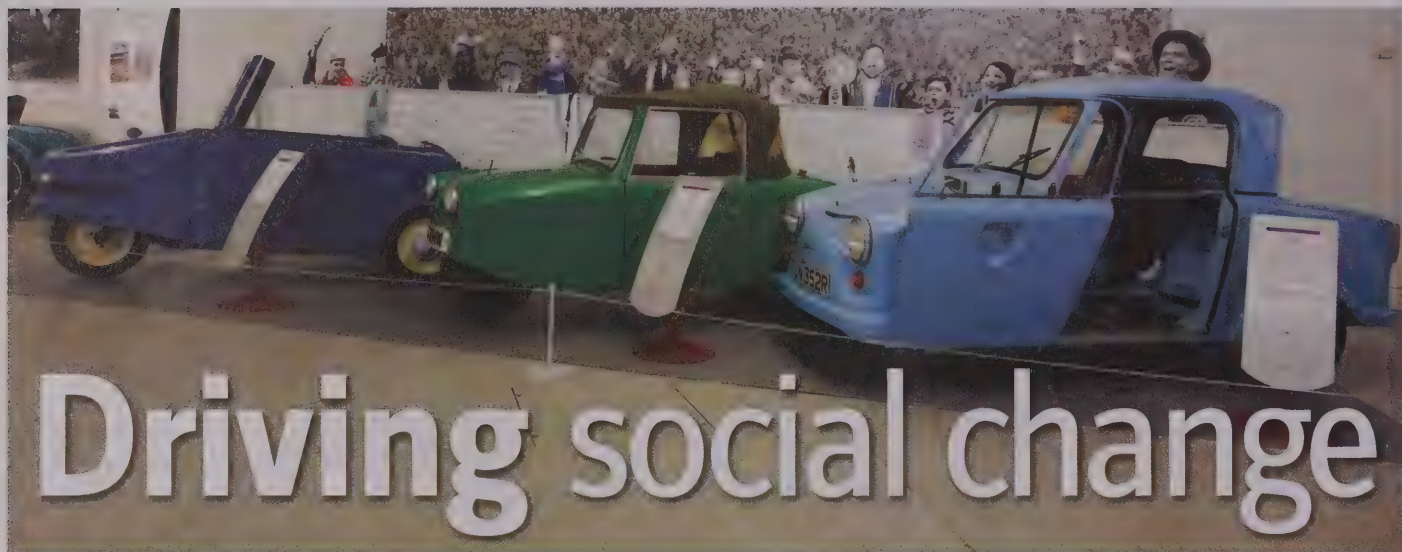
This system is compact, easy to use and flexible. It even has a proximity detector, enabling you to find an object that's obscured – your keys may be hidden under a cushion, for instance. It's also cheaper than the Doro.

INFORMATION

Doro MemoryPlus 335 object locator
doro-uk.com
£33.99

FOFA Key & Wallet Finders
Findlostkeys.com
Rnib.org.uk
£24.99 per set
Individual fobs £14.99

helen dolphin



KEVIN VAUGHN/LENS ART



It's interesting to note how often what's provided for disabled people reflects society's attitudes towards us. No more so is this the case says **Helen Dolphin**, than in an exhibition of disabled people's transport through the ages

Ever since I started work for the disabled motorists' charity Mobilise I've had to walk past an Invacar Model 70 and a 1947 Argson 198cc Tricycle to get to my desk. The Argson tricycle has an amazing history as it was used by Mr Denny Denley MBE, President of Mobilise, to cross the Swiss Alps in 1947. Following his alpine adventure, Mr Denley went on to found the Invalid Tricycle Association, later the Disabled Drivers' Association, one of the two charities that merged to form Mobilise in 2005.

However, I no longer walk past these vehicles on the way to my desk because earlier this year they were picked up and taken across

the country to the Coventry Transport Museum, which displays the world's largest collection of British road transport. These vehicles are now part of an exhibition called Transport for Disabled People: Past – Present – Future.

This exhibition consists of a range of vehicles – from early Bath chairs to models of

the future. It demonstrates just how far vehicles have evolved in terms of means of propulsion, design and technology and presents a unique opportunity for visitors to see a diverse collection of specialist vehicles. However, this exhibition is not just about the vehicles. It also attempts to question the attitudes of

society to the disabled people who used them.

The exhibition was the idea of the Coventry Warwickshire Leicestershire Group of Mobilise to commemorate their 60th Anniversary. Their President Mr Grant Cobb and their Chairman Ms Norma Lewis (*pictured left with Tanni*) had worked with the museum staff for 18 months, planning the exhibition. Grant Cobb said: "I have received many favourable comments from the hundreds of visitors who have visited the exhibition. Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson who came to the opening event described it as 'wonderful'."

Before motor vehicles became widely available,



KEVIN VAUGHN/LENS ART

most disabled people who were fortunate enough to remain mobile owned a "Bath chair" or "invalid carriage" which were either propelled by hand or pushed by another person. Most of the motorised ones took the form of a three-wheeler built for a single person. This "single person" design feature was to become a requirement throughout the decades and is in fact still a requirement of the modern day "invalid carriage". It seems to reflect the view either that disabled people would not have anyone to share a vehicle



KEVIN VAUGHN/LENS ART

with, or shouldn't be trusted to drive others on grounds of capability.

However, one of the biggest changes to happen to transport for disabled people was the end of the Invalid Vehicle Scheme and the introduction of the

Mobility Allowance in 1976. This allowance broke the mould in giving help to disabled people regardless of their ability to drive. It also enabled disabled people to have choice in the form of a cash allowance, rather than imposing a specific type of vehicle on them.

Thus the Motability Scheme was born in 1977 and for the first time disabled people could afford a standard car. So now vehicles for disabled people are just Fords, Vauxhalls, BMWs or anything else a disabled person wants to

drive. It's good to look back at just how far we have come and be thankful for past campaigners like Denny Denley MBE who have helped improve the mobility of so many disabled people today.

INFORMATION

The exhibition is open until 4 July 2010 and admission to the museum is free. For more information about the exhibition, visit www.transport-museum.com or call the Coventry Transport Museum on 02476 234270.

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




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GB Paralympians pipped to post in athletics...

Two Paralympians intent on competing at the highest level stole the show at the opening of the Paralympic World Cup in Manchester.

Jason Smyth of Ireland and Oscar Pistorius of South Africa showed their international pedigree on a day when Great Britain's squad struggled to impress.

Before a record crowd of over 5,000 spectators, made up largely of school-children, Smyth kicked off events in impressive fashion, winning the opening event, the men's T11-13 200m, by over a second from Luis Goncalves of Portugal. He later went on to pick up the

sprint double, winning the 100m in equally impressive style in 10.66, ahead of GB's James Ball who finished second in 11.76.

The double Paralympic gold medallist has been training with American Olympic sprinter Tyson Gay in Florida, and has already qualified for this summer's non-disabled European Championships in Barcelona. Smyth's personal best for the 100m is currently 10.41, near the Irish non-disabled national record of 10.35.

Paralympic sport's most recognisable figure, Oscar Pistorius, also picked up two golds, coming in first in both

the T44 100m and 400m.

It was something of a routine afternoon for Pistorius who, while well outside his personal best times, still won comfortably in both events, taking the 100m in 11.33 and the 400m in 48.83.

The South African will now turn his attention to making the qualifying grade for the Commonwealth Games in India this Autumn.

Pistorius was given a strong run in both events by Great Britain's Ian Jones, who continues to develop.

Great Britain's leading light on the day proved to be Scottish sprinter Libby

Clegg, who took gold in the T11/12 100m ahead of arch-rival Eva Ngui from Spain.

A jaded David Weir, on paper one of GB's strongest bets for a medal, had to make do with silver in the 800m, after being narrowly beaten by Switzerland's Marcel Hug. In the 1500m, Weir seemed to be running a tactical race until Hug powered past at the bell. The Paralympic champion and world record holder looked powerless to reply, eventually finishing fifth.

"I feel very tired today. I raced yesterday and have been racing today and it's been very hard work. I think I need a break," he said.

...but lead in the basketball

GB's men's wheelchair basketball team secured their first Paralympic World Cup title since 2005 with a 53-42 victory over Canada in Sunday's final.

The GB team led from the off against a side they had already dispatched easily in the round-robin stage of the tournament, and always looked likely to claim victory due to their efficiency under the basket.

Experienced guard Jon Pollock led his side with an impressive 17 personal points, while Ian Sagar weighed in with 13.

The victory vindicated the coach Murray Treseder's decision to rest several key players in the previous game against eventual bronze medallists Australia.

Pollock said: "I feel we are gradually getting better. Today we were better than two to three weeks ago in training, so to win the Paralympic World Cup is a big step for us."

The win stands GB's men in good shape for the World Championships, to take place in Birmingham in July.

In the women's events, a young GB side were over-



ACTION IMAGES / JASON CAIRNDUFF

powered by Australia in the bronze medal match, losing 24-59 despite a promising first half.

Women's coach Gary Peel said: "Today's match was a

learning experience. We've got a young team here and the players were nervous, but so were some of the more experienced players, so we have to work on that."

Oranges defeat greens

The Netherlands claimed the first ever Paralympic World Cup title in seven-a-side football, with a 3-2 win over Ireland in Manchester's rain-soaked Regional Arena.

The match was a bad-tempered affair from the start, with talismanic Dutch forward Ilias Visker felled by a thunderous tackle just five seconds in, leaving the tournament top-scorer face down on the sodden turf and screaming in pain.

That set the tone for much of the first half, with full-blooded challenges from both sides on a slippery surface. There was some

slick passing, nonetheless, with the Dutch controlling most of the first half, and much of the good work coming from the lively Visker. The Netherlands then stretched their lead to two from the penalty spot, after Dennis Straatman was pushed in the box. Straatman himself took the kick, firing high into McGillivray's net.

Against the run of play, Gary Messit pulled Ireland back into the game just before half-time, bundling a loose ball home after the Dutch defence failed to clear.

In the second half, Ireland

started rejuvenated, levelling the scores within a minute with Jason Moran firing home from the edge of the box. But it was to be the Netherlands' day, when Jeffrey Bruinier saved the game from going into extra time by cashing a dubious free kick awarded just outside the Irish box.

Said Marcel Geestman, Netherlands Head Coach: "We're really happy to win the gold medal because the other teams are the top competitors in the world, and going on to other competitions with this win in our heads will boost the team's confidence."

In the third-place match, GB thumped the USA 8-4

to take the bronze medal, with Michael Barker netting four times.

Though disappointed not to get the gold, GB captain and goalkeeper Jordan Raynes was pleased with his team's win. "The Paralympic World Cup has been a reality check for all the lads. We've not done as well as we would have hoped, but it's fantastic to be involved in such a big tournament.

"I think you learn more from a defeat than a win. That's good for some of the younger lads on the team to experience, so they realise it's not always a smooth experience to compete in an elite tournament like this. We'll learn from this."



ACTION IMAGES / PAUL THOMAS

Britons take gold in the pool

The last day of competition at the Paralympic World Cup saw four world records broken at the Aquatics Centre in Manchester, as British swimmers dominated proceedings in the pool.

It was Ellie Simmonds, the

teenage superstar from the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, who opened proceedings in style, breaking her own world best mark in the SM6 200m Individual Medley, in a time of 3:11.06. GB's Natalie Jones came second.

Speaking after the race, Simmonds said: "I didn't really think I was going to do that good a time. I'm just really happy it's a world record. I haven't swum the 100m Breaststroke for a few years and so I'm happy to have swum a PB."

Sam Hynd, another rising young star among GB's swimming squad, also bettered his own world best with a time of 4:26.08 in the S8 400m Freestyle.

Youngster Charlotte Henshaw took the world record in the SB6 100m Backstroke from team-mate Liz Johnson, while veteran Nyree Lewis trimmed a gnat's breath of three

hundredths of a second off her own record.

Aside from the record breakers, there were golds for Stephanie Millward (*photo, left*) in the S9 100m butterfly, Jonathan Fox in the S7 100m backstroke, Sascha Kindred in the SM6 200m individual medley, Louise Watkin in the S9 50m freestyle, Thomas Young in the S8 100m backstroke and Matt Walker in the S7 50m freestyle, beating arch-rival Dave Roberts.

The swimmers will now turn their attentions to the upcoming World Championships, taking place in Eindhoven in the Netherlands this August.

entertainmentnow

Plinth has got a lot of bottle

The latest occupant of the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square reflects Nelson back to himself. But, says **Kelly Mullan** it also reflects only part of the artist's identity

As disabled people we've increasingly made our presence felt in London's Trafalgar Square. Every September performers take over the pedestrianised space to celebrate Liberty disability arts Festival and we keep popping up on the Fourth Plinth, which after being empty for years now displays specially commissioned artworks and has gained popular status as a national mantelpiece.

Following the sculpture of "Alison Lapper Pregnant"; and filmmaker Liz Crow dressed as a Nazi in a wheelchair participating in Anthony Gormley's "One & Other" serial installation, disabled artist Yinka Shonibare MBE – he says he uses the epithet in a playful and ironic way – recently unveiled "Nelson's Ship in a Bottle".

Given this increasing visibility of disability in the Square it seems a shame that the artist's identity as a disabled



Boris Johnson and the artist Yinka Shonibare

person isn't in the foreground.

"Alison Lapper Pregnant" put a disabled person right out there and got people talking about representations of disability, but the sculpture was made by a non-disabled artist, Marc Quinn.

In contrast, "Nelson's Ship in a Bottle" has been made by a disabled artist but in the sheaf of press material distributed at the unveiling there is not one mention of disability.

At the unveiling I was surprised that the artist's wheelchair was discarded for photo opportunities and tucked in behind a bin.



When I asked Yinka Shonibare why he wasn't being photographed in his wheelchair he explained: "I don't use my wheelchair much apart from at train stations or airports. Why should I behave differently today?"

The artist was happy to talk about disability when asked and says he hopes other disabled artists will see this achievement as proof that "disabled artists can achieve what any artist can".

But he isn't giving away how the ship got in the bottle. At the unveiling he laughed and said "I'm not telling!"

"Nelson's Ship in a Bottle" is the first plinth commission to engage with the historical symbolism of Trafalgar Square, which commemorates the Battle of Trafalgar. It's a scale replica of Nelson's ship HMS Victory with the twist that the sails are made from batik, a fabric associated with African identity and independence. The artist says the piece reflects the story of multiculturalism in London but it does seem strange that disability is being left out of the story. Surely it would make it all the richer?

That Glastonbury attitude

A club gig in London led to Bug Prentice being on this year's Glastonbury bill not once but twice. Founder, singer and guitarist with the band, Ally Craig tells *Disability Now* about how it started and where it's all going



Ally (far right) with his Bug Prentice bandmates Steve and Ruth

Back in 2007 I asked two mates Steve and Ruth to join me in the studio for a session as I'd seen them play in other bands and thought they were good. We jammed together and, even though my two friends hadn't met before, it worked so well that we decided to form a band properly.

We started off with about five songs which we recorded that year and

since then we've been fleshing more out. We can't really afford to be in the studio all the time so at the moment we are recording at home with a friend's equipment.

I've been playing guitar for 15 years. For me it isn't about playing a showy riff or solo, though, it's just how I get my music across. It is funny because I play my guitar across my lap because of my wheelchair, so when we play

live people often come up to me after and say "how the crap did you do that?!". It's pretty cool to blow a few minds!

The lyrics are often abstract. I know what they mean, but they might have different associations for everybody else. Sometimes the songs are inspired by films or filmmakers; we have a song where all the lyrics are references to Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*.

I used to play live shows on my own, and when I did a few people were unintentionally quite patronising. They'd see me wheel up to the stage and then be genuinely surprised that they enjoyed my music, that I was good. I've noticed that now I'm in a band I don't get that, I guess because people think "well if the others think he's okay it must be good!"

Our first live gig was for Attitude Is Everything; I

guess with me being disabled our paths were bound to eventually cross.

We recently played a Club Attitude show at Cargo in London which was a good warm-up for Glastonbury, though it wasn't nearly as big! Graham from Attitude is Everything recommended us for their stage's roster and when I heard we were actually going to play I was – and still am – so daunted. It turns out Steve and Ruth can't make it so I have to train two new bandmates for the show, too!

The way I see it is if I'm able to have a career in music it would be nice but I don't necessarily want to be a big star. It sounds pretty tiresome to get mobbed all the time! But if people hear and enjoy my music it would be pretty nice.

• Ally Craig was talking to Cathy Reay

• Bug Prentice play the Hub and Arcadia stages at Glastonbury Festival on 26 June

• For more information on Bug Prentice visit www.bugprentice.com or Attitude Is Everything www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk

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webwatch

The "tag-team talk show" *Dis Connected* operates like

Radio Four's *Chain*

Reaction: each week a famous disabled person interviews another disabled celebrity and the interviewee goes on to be the next week's interviewer.

The chain so far is talk show presenter Trisha Goddard, children's TV presenter Carrie Burnell, *Tracy Beaker* actor Cara Readle, TV presenter Gail Porter, barrister John Horan, Mystery Jets front man Blaine Harrison, Paralympian and peer Tanni Grey-Thompson and veteran campaigner Baroness [Jane] Campbell.

Producer Kate Ansell explained the thinking behind this choice of talking heads. "Disability is not an uncontested term," she says, "and we wanted to explore what it means for different people, so we went to people who were on the radar for one thing or another, like Trisha and Gail who aren't sure if they see themselves as disabled but are willing to talk about it.

"I thought it would be interesting to get people with invisible disabilities like long-term mental

Only dis connect



Ouch!, the BBC's disability web pages, are well known for their full-on, unapologetic and often quirky approach to their subject. **Kelly Mullan** reviews a new video project that's just gone live



illness talking to people with physical disabilities about what it means to be disabled. I hope this'll get people talking about disability in a wider context."

It's an intimate and engaging format. The celebs seem excited to be

Carrie Burnell to Trisha Goddard, and Blaine Harrison admits he used to have a poster of Gail Porter on his wall.

The participants take a thoughtful and reflective approach, and egos don't get in the way, with the exception of Cara Readle who didn't seem to ask any questions or want to talk about anything broader than her own career.

There are some candid revelations. Trisha Goddard says she was initially angry to be labelled as disabled but has come round to the idea; John Horan says he had a patronising attitude to disabled athletes before he became disabled; and Baroness Campbell says she loves power!

Kate Ansell is rightly pleased with the series.

"It was an experiment, getting disabled people together in a room to see what happens. The worry that kept me awake at night was that we'd get two people together and there'd be silence but everyone found common ground and difference."

• See: bbc.co.uk/ouch

→ Have your say

- write to us **Disability Now**, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW
- email us editor@disabilitynow.org.uk
- phone us 020 7619 7323

worklife

Shaun shows the road ahead

From hill starts to emergency stops. **Shaun Cox** has had to teach all the elements you'll need if you want to pass your driving test. He tells us why he likes putting people on the road to success



I qualified as a driving instructor in February this year. I'm looking at doing a course to teach people with disabilities but right now I'm teaching non-disabled people ranging in age from early 20s to late 50s who want to drive an automatic car.

I became an instructor after doing various odd jobs. As one contract was coming to an end I thought "what am I going to do now?" I like driving and my friend, David Ward a driving instructor, said that he thought I'd make a good instructor because I'm a good communicator. (I think he meant I talk a lot).

I love it. You have to have a lot of patience and be fairly laid back. If you had a hot temper you'd end up

shouting all the time or being very nervous.

It's like any other job where sometimes you think "oh for god's sake I'd rather be somewhere else". But on the whole I don't find it boring or repetitive. You might be teaching the same thing, but everyone is different. So you have to teach each pupil in a different way. If you're teaching a manoeuvre to one person they might pick it up quickly. But you might have to break the same manoeuvre down into steps for someone else.

I've only come across prejudice once so far. When I turned up to meet the client, they didn't say that my disability was an issue, but they said that the car was too big even though I'd told

them what the car was before. I managed to persuade them to come out for an hour to see if they could get on with the car and that if they didn't want to go with me after that I'd give them details of a different instructor with a different car. They stuck with me and I got them through the test.

I never put music on when I'm teaching because I want my pupils to concentrate on what they're doing, so I try and make it

as fun as possible, have a laugh and a joke.

My advice to people thinking of becoming a driving instructor would be don't be afraid to give it a go. It's not easy, the exams to qualify are quite difficult. But you can do as many hours as you want depending on whether you want to make a living out of it or work part-time. I have an advanced driving certificate from the Institute of Advanced Motorists; I'm always looking to stretch my mind and there are other courses and qualifications for me to be able to teach people with disabilities.

• **Shaun Cox** was talking to **Sunil Peck**

SHAUN COX: CAREER PATH

- 1982 – Left Ethel Davis School in Ilford
- 1983-1984 – Blakemore Riding Stables – Trainee groom
- 1983-1984 – Presto Supermarket – Produce department
- 1985-1986 – Sherrards Training Centre – To do Electronics, and where I learnt to drive
- 1986 – To date – A member of St. John Ambulance as a First Aider
- 1988-1989 – Worked for Asda superstore – Produce department
- 1989-1994 – Went to Papworth Everard to

- work in Papworth Industries and did a number of jobs including Woodwork, Electronics, Vehicle Body Building, CAD Drawing Office.
- 1994-2002 – Worked for WorldCom as a Health and Safety Officer
- 2003-2004 – Went to work for C & T Fleet Services in security section as a CCTV Operator
- 2004 – To date – Went to work for Papworth Hospital Foundation Trust as a car park attendant
- 2010 – Qualified as a driving instructor – For Driveaway School Of Motoring

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owner from new, 43k miles, fsh, MOT 'til Nov 2010. In excellent condition, £6,750 ono. Tel: **01933 318763** (Northants), mobile: **07980 504007** or email: **hazel.barnett@ngh.nhs.uk**

VW SHARAN 1.9, diesel, bright red, 130 bhp, 04 plate, alloy wheels, pas, air con, e/window and e/mirrors, central locking, CD player, carries 6 including wheelchair. Rear seats all removable, 2 seats have integrated harness for child. Wheelchair Conversion by Automotive Group with rear entry via drop down ramp, 4-point floor fixings and inertia belts. One lady owner from new, 10 months' MOT, regularly serviced, only 59k miles, £10,500 ono. Tel: **01924 871504** (Wakefield) or mobile: **07525 090823**.

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2009(58)	Renault Kangoo 1.6 Authentique auto, 7,000 mls	£10,795
2007(57)	Renault Kangoo 1.6 Authentique auto, A/C, 22,000 mls	£10,995
2008(08)	Peugeot Partner 1.6D Escapade, A/C, 5sp, 12,000 mls	£11,795
2009(58)	Fiat Doblo 1.9D Dynamic Low Floor, A/C, 5,000 mls	£11,995
2009(09)	Renault Kangoo Sirius Expression, auto, Up Front w.chair passenger	£19,995

FAMILY MPV

wheelchair accessible, over 30 in stock including

2002(02)	Seat Alhambra, 2.0 S, 5sp, Liberty, 59,000 mls	£9,495
2006(06)	Kia Sedona 2.5 Low Floor, 5sp, 46,000 mls	£11,395
2005(05)	Kia Sedona CRDi LE, A/C, 5sp, 52,000 mls	£11,995
2005(05)	Kia Sedona CRDi LE, A/C, 5sp, 39,000 mls	£12,595
2005(54)	Renault Grand Espace 2.2 DCi, 5sp, 65,000 mls	£12,995
2007(07)	Kia Sedona 2.5, 5sp, A/C, 23,000 mls	£13,495
2006(56)	Kia Sedona CRDi SE, auto, leather, A/C, 21,000 mls	£12,995
2006(56)	Seat Alhambra 2.0 Reference, 5sp, A/C, 29,000 mls	£14,495
2004(54)	Mercedes Vaneo Brotherwood 1.6, 5sp, A/C, 32,000 mls	£14,995
2005(54)	Mercedes Vaneo Brotherwood, 1.7 D Trend, 5sp, 52,000 mls	£14,995
2005(05)	Ford Galaxy 1.9 Tdi Zetec, auto, A/C, 18,000 mls	£17,995
2008(08)	Kia Sedona CRDi GS, 5sp, A/C, Full Low Floor, 5,000 mls	£18,995
2008(08)	Kia Sedona CRDi LS, auto, A/C Full Low Floor, 18,000 mls	£21,995
2010(10)	Kia Sedona CRDi GS, A/C, Full Low Floor, 300 mls	£22,995
2010(10)	Ford Galaxy 1.8 DCi Edge, 5sp, A/C, Low Floor, 5 seats, NEW	£24,395
2009(59)	Volkswagen Caravelle, 174 SE, 6sp, A/C, Lift, 800 miles	£27,995
2010(59)	Kia Sedona CRDi TS, WAV Evolution Side Entry, Up Front, 3,000 mls	£29,995

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2006(56)	Citroen Dispatch 1.9D, 5sp, 5 seats, 49,000 mls	£9,495
2005(55)	Renault Trafic 1.9DCi, 5sp, 5 seats, 44,000 mls	£9,995
2005(05)	Renault Master 2.5DCi, 5sp, A/C, 5 seats, 14,000 mls	£11,995
2007(07)	Volkswagen T5, 1.9TDi, Ramp, 5 sp, A/C, 34,000 mls	£15,995
2008(08)	Fiat New Scudo, 1.6D, 5sp, A/C, 5 seats, Low Floor, 12,000 mls	£15,995
2008(08)	Renault Master 2.5DCi, auto, A/C, 6 seats, Chairlift, 19,000 mls	£18,795
2010(10)	Renault Master 2.5 DCi, 8 seats, delivery miles, 2 wheelchairs	£21,995

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2006(55)	Suzuki Life, 1.3 GL auto, Drive from Wheelchair, 6,000 mls	£14,995
2006(56)	Suzuki Life, 1.3 GL auto, Drive from Wheelchair, 2,000 mls	£16,995
2007(08)	Renault Kan-go Sirius : Drive from Wheelchair, choice of 4 from	£19,995
2005(55)	VW T5 Shuttle LWB 2.5 SE Auto, Drive from Wheelchair, 8,000 mls	£24,995
2009(59)	New Renault Solus, 115 Cdi, Choice, Drive from Wheelchair,	£26,995
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2007 Renault Kangoo Gowrings 1.2 Itr petrol (J9557) Silver, 4 seats, 34,000 miles, 5 door, Ramp, Lowered rear floor. **£8,395**



2008 Renault Traffic SWB 2.0 Itr Turbo diesel (J9560) Silver, 4 seats, Manual, 18,000 miles, Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor. **£14,250**

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2007 Sirus Renault, Kangoo Auto 1.6 Itr Petrol (J9143) Silver, 3 seats, 5,500 miles, 5 door, Remote controlled rear doors and ramp. **£19,500**

2005 Fiat Doblo Aspen 1.9JTD (J9593) Red, 4 seats, 33,000 miles, 5 door, Lowered rear floor. **£7,995**

2010 Volkswagen Caddy New SWB Disabled Driver 1.9 TDi Auto (J89991) Silver, Drive from wheelchair car or Upfront w/c passenger, Remote controlled rear door and ramp low floor, Driver hand controls fitted. **£24,995**

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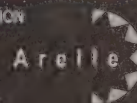
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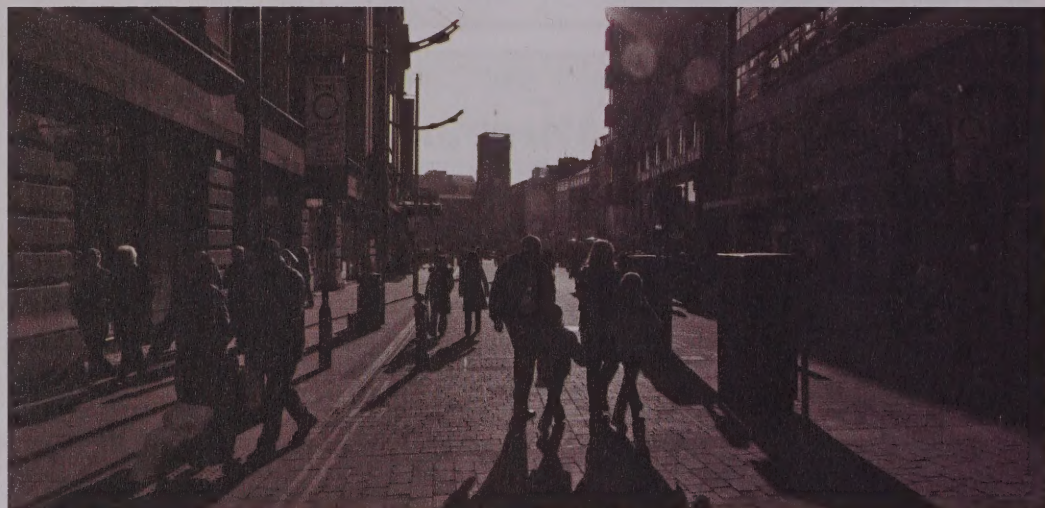
Not so grim oop north

A week in Manchester has taught **Paul Carter** that he's more at home playing away

As I'm sure you will all definitely have read (right?) a few pages prior to this one, I recently spent a fun-filled week away in the north – Manchester to be more precise – covering the Paralympic World Cup for this fine organ.

It was a slightly scary experience, mainly because it's the longest period in my adult life I've spent outside London and the Home Counties without being on holiday. And as much as I love Manchester, I don't think spending a week there can constitute a holiday in anyone's book. (If you do happen to holiday there regularly, please don't write in.)

As you may have guessed, cabin fever set in before too long. I realised I'd finally made the full transition into Alan Partridge territory when one of the hotel staff, without any trace of irony, asked if I'd "moved in". If there was a book of phrases that indicated you've been inside a budget hotel (or any hotel for that matter) for too long, and should leave immediately, that should be at number one.



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“It's the longest period in my adult life I've spent outside London and the Home Counties”

I did find myself put in what they called a “disabled room” though. Unfortunately for me, my room's impairment was that it was placed next door to the laundry, or, as it sounded to me at 6am in the morning, the Battle of Britain. Clearly they were hoping that anyone requiring said room also had a hearing impairment, such as the volume of noise. I think they had the Incredible Hulk loading the dryers

judging by the slamming.

Thankfully though, I found the rest of the city and its inhabitants far more inviting and friendly. Scary but friendly. People actually talked to me in the street and everything, which is something extremely alien to me. If anyone so much as asks me the time in London I instinctively feel it necessary to protect my wallet, phone and keys. The thing is, they didn't stop at merely passing the time of day, they actually offered to help me with things like getting something down from a high place, did I want my pint carrying, that kind of thing. There was one slightly surreal moment when a man said “well done” to me at

about three in the afternoon.

I'm not sure what I did. I must have been walking pretty superbly that day.

I thought long and hard during my northern exile looking for reasons for my new found attention, but couldn't explain the north south divide in friendliness. Maybe I was just lucky and it was bob a job week or something, I don't know.

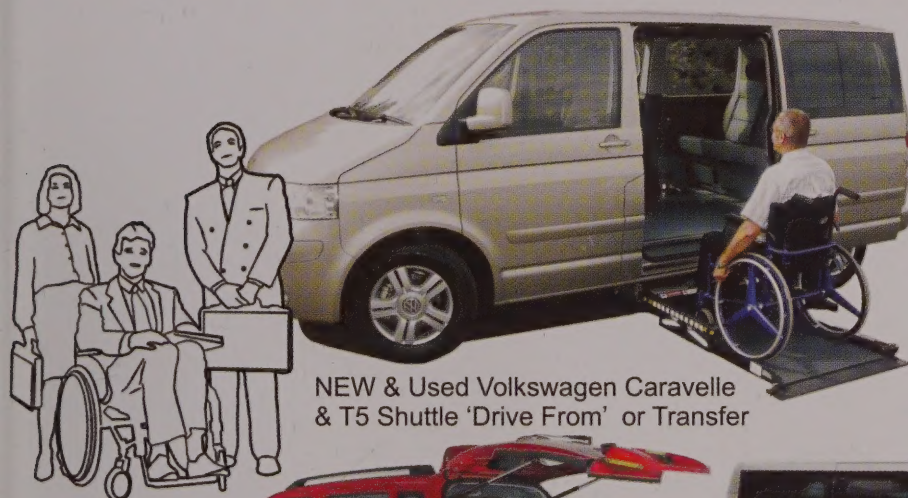
If there was any suspicion that it was all my imagination, that was banished as soon as I got back. I had to squeeze onto a packed tube with all of my stuff, pressed into the crotch of someone carrying a guitar and wearing odd socks. London, it's good to be home.

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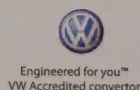
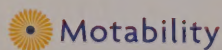
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